Vanguard Studies of Soviet Russia

HOW THE SOVIETS WORK

H. N. BRAILSFORD

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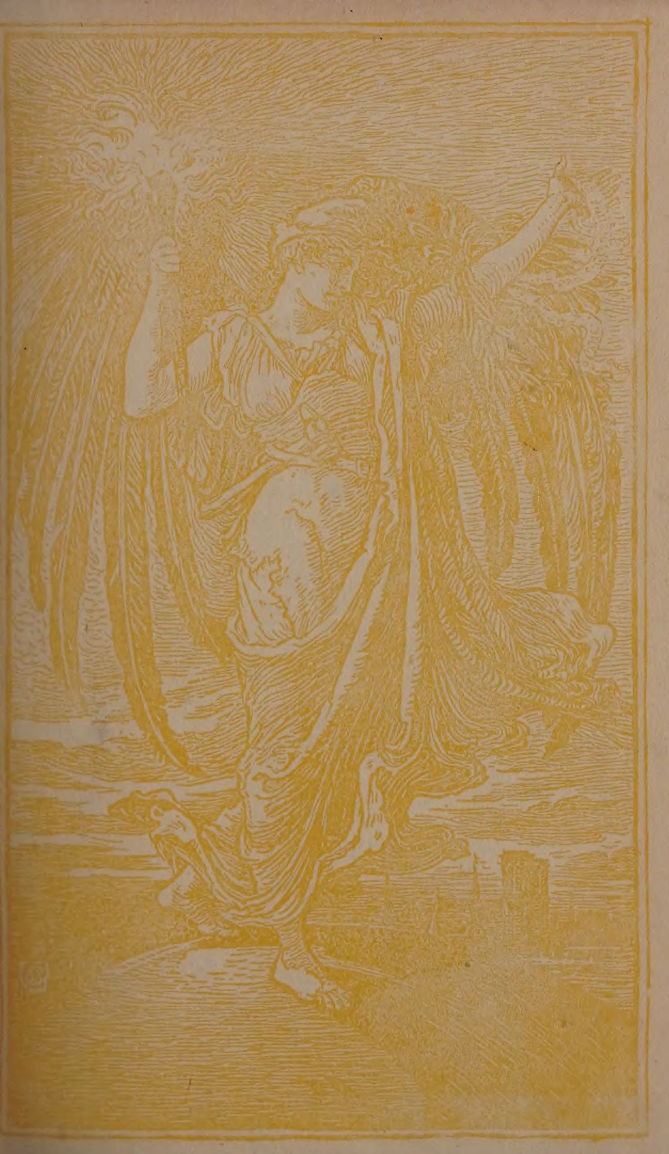

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HOW THE SOVIETS WORK

VANGUARD STUDIES OF SOVIET RUSSIA

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Head of the Department of Social Service, Yale University.

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Vanguard Studies of Soviet Russia

How the Soviets Work

By H. N. BRAILSFORD

Author of *The War of Steel and Gold; A League of Nations; Shelley, Godwin and Their Circle*, etc.

NEW YORK
VANGUARD PRESS

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VANGUARD PRINTINGS
First—November, 1927

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

459

To the sincere men and women of Russia who, despite prison, exile, and death, burned out their lives trying to attain freedom, peace, and brotherhood for the common people.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

HENRY NOEL BRAILSFORD

Born in Yorkshire, England, in 1873; graduated from Glasgow University, M.A. with double honors; studied special courses in Oxford and Berlin; was Assistant Professor of Logic in Glasgow University; served in the Greek Foreign Legion in the Turco-Greek War of 1897; was foreign correspondent and leaderwriter for *The Manchester Guardian* and *The Daily News;* served on the staff of the London *Nation* throughout the editorship of H. W. Massingham; acted as relief administrator in Macedonia, and was a member of the Carnegie Commission in the Balkans; editor, from 1922-1926, of *The New Leader,* the London Socialist weekly; author of *The War of Steel and Gold; A League of Nations; Shelley, Godwin and their Circle,* etc.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

THE Russian Revolution startled a war-diseased world and ushered in the most daring political and economic experiment of the twentieth century. Considering the vast territory affected, the radical changes inaugurated, and the influence which has been and still is being exerted on international relations, there is probably no greater event in modern history, whether for good or evil. Most Americans forget that a decade has already passed since Lenin and his Communistic followers assumed the power. The period of rapid revolutionary change has gone. Russia is painstakingly, step by step, building something different, something unique, something whose final destination is unpredictable.

America has been a land of discovery from its foundation. Not only in the realm of scientific invention, but in first attaining the coveted North Pole and in exploring other unknown areas of the world, Americans have given generously of life and treasure. Today we are uninformed about a great nation covering one-sixth of the land surface of the world. Russia is cut off by an Atlantic Ocean of prejudice, misunderstanding, and propaganda. We still maintain a rigid official quarantine about the Soviet Government. The result is ignorance frankly admitted by one "of the highest authorities in our Government," who declares this inevitable "in the absence of diplomatic relations." Judge Gary corroborates this verdict, "Like many other Americans, I am ignorant in regard to many of the

conditions which exist in Russia at the present time."*

Every scientist realizes that ignorance is one of the most dangerous forces in the world today. No matter how good or how bad the Soviet system, we should know all about it. Instead, we have been ruled by propaganda and hearsay.

The fact is that for the past ten years the Bolshevik government has been operated on, dissected, and laid in its coffin amidst loud applause and rejoicing by distinguished orators in all parts of the world; yet today it is stronger, more stable, than ever before in its history and its leaders have been longer in power than any other ruling cabinet in the world. It is high time that we appraise this government as scientifically and impartially as possible, without indulging in violent epithets or questionable and controversial dogmas. Surely the world is not so abysmally ignorant that after ten years of the rule of the Soviet we cannot discover a common core of truth about Russia.

Whether the Communists are thought to be "dangerous enemies of society" or the "saviors of humanity," the facts should be known before judgment is pronounced. No matter what our conviction, we have to admit that the Bolsheviki are hammering out a startling new mechanism in the field of political control. Their experiment deserves scientific study, not hostile armies; intelligent criticism, not damning epithets.

In the past, America has been flooded with propaganda of all shades. Dr. E. A. Ross dedicates his last volume on Russia "To my fellow-Americans who have become weary of being fed lies and propaganda about Russia." In his chapter on the "Poison Gas Attack"

* *Current History*, February, 1926.

he lists forty-nine stories broadcast throughout America which have been proved totally false. Other writers have pointed out similar facts. Walter Lippman, Editor-in-Chief of *The New York World*, in his illuminating study of all Russian news which appeared in *The New York Times* in the early period of the Revolution, has proved the stupidity, inaccuracy, and falsehood of the "facts and fabrications" which have passed as news. Even those articles and books which have tried to deal honestly with the subject have usually been inadequate. They have either been too general or they have been specific but too brief to be of more than passing value. In all too many cases they are based on only a few weeks of observation in Russia by someone who did not know the native language.

The present series is designed to meet the need for reliable, accurate information on the major aspects of present-day Russia. We have tried to make it as scientifically accurate as is possible in the treatment of contemporary phenomena. It has been our aim in selecting each author to choose someone who because of previous experience and training was peculiarly well qualified as an authority on the particular subject to which he was assigned. In every case we have chosen those who either have made a prolonged stay in Russia, actually writing their volumes while in the country, or those who have made a special trip to Russia to secure the facts about which they write. We have tried to make the series inclusive, covering the more important aspects of the many-sided developments in Russia. Each volume is devoted to one major subject alone. People want detailed, accurate facts in readable form. Here they can be found, ranging all the way from an

analysis of the governmental machinery to the school system. Within this series some repetition has been inevitable. The editor believes that this is distinctly desirable since each author expounds his subject in his own way, with an emphasis original to him and in the light of his own data. No effort has been made to eliminate contradictions, yet they are surprisingly few. Where the testimony of all is unanimous, the conclusions reached are overwhelmingly strong. Where differences exist, they should stimulate the reader to weigh the evidence even more carefully.

It is probably too much to hope that propaganda organizations will not endeavor to discredit any such genuine effort to arrive at the truth. Perhaps it is sufficient to say in refutation that no similar attempt to secure the facts about Russia from trained experts has yet been made in America or elsewhere, so far as the writer is aware. There is scant ground for intelligent criticism unless similar scientific studies have been made with conflicting results; even then time alone can proclaim the final truth. No sincere and unprejudiced scientist will deplore an effort to study and describe what has happened in the first experiment the world has ever seen in applied communism, even if mistakes have been made in the analysis.

These volumes on the whole not only contain the most valuable data so far available, but they will probably remain of permanent worth. In the future no real historian endeavoring to master the facts about the great political upheaval in Russia will care to ignore them. Is Russia the most tyrannical dictatorship of bloody despots that the world has ever seen? Is Russia the first step in the building of a new world order whose keynote will be industrial democracy? We do

not pretend to give here the final judgment of history, but we do claim to have made a sincere effort to portray the facts.

Thanks are due to the authors who have so painstakingly sought to present the truth as they found it, to the publishers for their assistance in making this a notable and usable series, and to all those whose labor, whether by hand or brain, has helped to give these volumes to the American public. We are indebted to Mr. Allan Wardell for giving funds which make possible our securing this volume.

JEROME DAVIS,
Yale University.

PREFACE

This book is the fruit of two visits to Russia—in 1920, and again, early in the present year. It is an attempt to give an account of the working of the Soviets as a political system. But as it grew in my mind, the constitutional questions sank into a secondary place. The Soviet system, after all, is not an experiment in constitution-building: it is an instrument which Russian Communists have found well adapted to secure them their leadership during the period of revolutionary dictation. Another subject, however, continually crossed that which the title suggests. The book is really as much an attempt to answer the question "Why does the Soviet work?" as the question "How does it work?" Every political system is a psychological experiment. I have tried to show how the survival in Russia of this system follows from the history of its working-class. A social structure which can, for nearly ten years, surmount the trials which Soviet Russia has experienced, manifestly has deep roots in human nature.

I must make a double apology, first to the writers of other volumes in this series, for trenching occasionally on their subjects, and then to my readers. One cannot study the Soviet system altogether in *vacuo*. It is a method for managing industry and agriculture, and promoting education and health. At the same time, I must apologize to the reader because my references to these subjects are inevitably brief, and sometimes vague.

They lie outside my theme. May I also remind critics, who may complain that I have said little about certain matters of controversy—about civil liberties for example—that these also form the subjects of separate volumes?

For the courtesy and attention which I met with in Russia, I should like to thank some friends, both old and new—in particular Comrades Fedor Rothstein, Rozinsky and Radek in the first category, together with the leaders of the Vladimir Soviet; and in the second, Comrades Bucharin, Ichok, and Larin, and my new acquaintances in Kazan. To the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs I owe a special debt, notably to Comrades Litvinoff and Karakhan in Moscow and to Ivan Maisky in London. The last of my pleasures in writing this book is to thank Miss Claire Leighton for the honor she has done me in reading my manuscript.

H. N. B.

London,
May Day, 1927

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HOW THE SOVIETS WORK

CHAPTER I

A FACTORY WITH A PAST

COTTON cloth, to the unpractised eye, looks much the same, whether it be woven in Lancashire or Shanghai. Wherever it may be, the same astonishing machines must grasp the elusive down that nature designed to carry the seeds scudding before a tropical wind. They coerce it; they transform it into long threads or colored webs; and everywhere they seem the impenetrable devices of a conjurer. One only knows that, through a century and a half, six tireless generations have added complexity to complexity. One watches with something akin to awe the deft fingers of the slight women's forms which stand at ease among the whirring magic and command it. Our guide confessed in a deprecating tone that the machines were antiquated. I was no wiser for his frankness. Through room after room we paced, and save that the notices on the walls were in Russian we might have been in Bolton. Only when we stepped outside into the deep snow and felt the shrewd wind that blew its dry powder in our faces, was I forced to realize that we were in Moscow. From a distant weaving shed in the vast confusion of buildings, familiar in their busy ugliness, the workers were tramping to the dining room. The women with their shawls over their heads seemed no

stranger than the machines they tended; the men, indeed, wore leather jackets or sheepskin coats, but under their fur caps, I guessed, the same pattern of cares and hopes, of resentments and ambitions must be weaving itself in Moscow as in Bolton. Their feet fell softly; one missed the clatter of the clogs, but here as in Lancashire the same pervasive hum of the same tyrannous machines dominated the scene and subdued the exotic glitter of the snow. Industry is everywhere a leveler.

As we crossed the courtyard, my eye fell upon an inscription cut in grey marble inserted in the factory wall. I wondered idly what it was. In Lancashire such a memorial might have recorded the good deeds of a benevolent employer, or the laying of a foundation stone by His Worship the Mayor. We went up to it, and for the first time this factory talked Russian with an authentic accent. Here in this courtyard, I read, on such and such a date in the last days of 1905, the eighteen men whose names followed, all workers in the Prohorovka Mill, were shot in cold blood by the Czar's soldiery. I tried to create a picture of the scene from my dim memories of that first abortive struggle of the Russian masses for freedom. The defeat of Russia's armies in the Far East by the Japanese whom she had affected to despise, and the pitiable ruin of her helpless fleet had shaken the nerve of her rulers and shattered the imperial idols of the crowd. Even from the nobility came the bold demand for civil liberty and the calling of a Parliament. And then the workers dealt their blow. Petersburg was paralysed by a general strike; the trains ceased to run, telegraphs were silent, and, daring the autocracy in the open, the delegates from its idle factories were meeting to frame their demands in the first Soviet. The Czar wavered, bent, turned for advice to

the liberal Count Witte, and gave his promise to summon an elected Duma. But Moscow cherished an even bolder hope. Its strikers raised their barricades and dared to dream, not merely of a political, but of a social revolution. They struck their blow twelve years before the hour of destiny. This factory, then, had a history. In its courtyard snow was not always white.

The dreary walls seemed less commonplace because these names were writ in marble. The machinery hummed with a difference, and Lancashire seemed far away. I enquired whether any of the older men who had lived through those days were still employed in the factory. I was soon seated in a room in its workers' club-house talking to a hale old man who poured out his recollections volubly and yet with precision. His wife sat beside him, listening for the most part with admiration and assent, but adding from time to time some detail from the stores of her memory.

Like most of the Russian textile workers old Ivan was a peasant by origin. He still had his plot of land, and his heart was in the village. But the poverty of the land had driven him to the factory, and his recollections of it went back to 1897. In those days a skilled worker might earn 13 roubles (roughly $6.50) a month, but his own wages were never above 10 roubles ($5). A girl could earn only 25 kopecks (12 cents) by a day's work. The moral atmosphere was unbearable. Nearly all the girls were seduced by the overseers and foremen. The factory was crowded with children under twelve years of age, whose competition hampered the struggles of the adults. On these wages the workers lived literally on dry black bread. The factory boiled with discontent, and the first strike took place in 1903, for higher wages. Strikes followed at frequent intervals, two or three in

every year, and always something was won. By 1903 they had more than doubled their wages, which now varied from 23 to 35 roubles a month. In that year, too, began the struggle for something more than wages, and among the fruits of their strike they won a *crêche* for thirty babies, a bath, a lying-in hospital, a library, and a school. In 1897 they were working a twelve-hour day; in 1903 they won the nine-hour day. But the management was always ready to take advantage of the ignorance and illiteracy of the workers. The men ventured on one occasion to call in the government inspector to examine their complaint that the piece workers were systematically cheated by the false measurement of the cloth they had woven. He came, to be sure, but he lunched at the owner's house and then, after generous refreshment, measured the wrong piece of cloth and declared the complaint unfounded. So, up and down, the wrestlers struggled, and when the workers seemed to gain ground, the owners would call up their reserves. After this series of strikes, six of the leaders were arrested and sent to Siberia. Ivan owed his own liberty at this time to the kindness of one of the directors, a liberal in politics, who hid him for three days in his own house until the hunt was over. But such mercies were rare. To suppress the spirit of discontent, the owners called on the government for military aid, and three hundred Cossacks, armed with their cruel *nagaikas* (whips), were quartered in the factory. They drove the strikers into the factory by lashing them with their whips. It was possible to drive the workers to the machines, but it was not possible to force them to work. To the Cossacks and their whips the men retorted with a stay-in-strike. In the end the owners were forced to offer reparation for the losses

which the piece-workers had suffered by the system of false measures. Everyone received three months' pay by way of compensation, and only then was work resumed.

A picture of life in this factory began to shape itself in my mind as Ivan talked. In this primitive world the owners gave way to an elemental greed which resorted to tricks that the West has long ago forgotten. The men snatched their gains without gratitude. And always hanging over their daily lives was the open threat of force. Siberia engulfed their most gallant comrades, and the Cossacks stood on guard at the factory gate. The English machines, I realized, did not bring Lancashire with them.

To force, while men keep their simplicity and their manhood, the answer will always be force. I asked Ivan what organization they possessed during this series of strikes. They had a Trade Union, though to use a western word may be to awaken false associations. It lived "underground." Its offices had to shift their addresses each night. Its leaders were men who never slept twice in the same bed. Some of them were "intellectuals" who combined education with agitation, and little groups of factory hands would gather cautiously to hear a lecture by candle-light behind carefully closed shutters. But in spite of all their precautions the active members were constantly arrested. Once a man was known as a Socialist, he could not long hope to go free. The leaders were, most of them, Bolsheviki (members, that is to say, of the majority section of the Social Democratic Party), but at this time the majority and the minority (Mensheviki) worked together. "The aim of all," Ivan declared, "was to overthrow Czardom." That seems, perhaps, an odd purpose for a Trade Union to follow, but more anomalous still were the Cossacks and the factory

yard. It had, in the winter of 1905, some two thousand members among the eight thousand workers, men, women, and children in this mill. "But few of us, Ivan went on, without a suspicion that he was saying anything unusual, "had revolvers, and those we had were wretched weapons which we could not trust for any target beyond thirty yards. These were distributed by the Party about two months before the December rising. Our tactics were to use them to get rifles. The workers' quarter of Moscow was patrolled by troops who went about in platoons of five or six men. Twenty or thirty workmen would lie in ambush and surround one of these groups of soldiers or gendarmes. The soldiers, at least, seemed by no means unwilling to give up their weapons if they could yield to superior force. In this way we got three thousand rifles, which we stored in the basement of a saw mill owned by a Social Revolutionary, but we were very short of cartridges. Explosives we got from the chemical laboratory of the factory. We took glycerine from the chemists' shops, for we were strong enough to be masters in our own quarter of the town. With the aid of the students we had learned how to make bombs."

Everything was ready when the General Strike was proclaimed on December 7. Ivan was one of the seven delegates which this factory sent to the strikers' Soviet. It had the honor of housing their headquarters' staff, which consisted of twelve workers and six "intellectuals." On the second day the strikers marched in procession through the streets. "On the third day (December 9) the troops attacked us and we erected our barricades. The fighting went on for ten days. On the 18th as many as 800 shells fell on our headquarters, and behind the barrage of the guns, the Cossacks man-

aged to surround us. We did our best, when we saw that our case was hopeless, to hide our guns, but we had soon to think of our own safety."

Ivan fled on the 19th to the shelter of his village, but his wife filled in the gap in his story. "The workers," she said, "had traitors in their ranks, and many, to save their own skins, were ready to point out those who had taken part in the fighting. These were shot on the spot. There were raids and searches in every house, and if a young man wore a student's cap, that was enough to ensure his death. These victims were gathered in the fields beyond the factory and mowed down by the hundred with machine guns. The noisiest machinery in the factory was started to drown the sound of the shooting, but we heard it all the same. The snow was lying deep, and soon the blood was running hot below it, down the gutters of the street. The fire brigade was even called to sop it up with cotton waste."

Ivan lay hidden in his village till February, but he was arrested at last, and, after a year in prison, was tried and sent to Siberia. There, in a remote aboriginal village, he hibernated, as it were, until, after the fall of Czardom in March, 1917, the prisoners came blinking from their dungeons to the light, and the exiles, some from their Swiss mountains and some from Siberian snows, returned for the decisive struggle.

The curtain fell, as Ivan told his story, with the bloody ending of the General Strike of 1905. I shall not attempt to fill in the history of the factory during the years that followed. The destiny of Russia had been written already by this formative experience. From it dated the really hopeless rift among the Russian Socialists. Some of them condemned as folly the resort to arms that had failed, while others determined, in better

circumstances and with better preparation, to repeat it till victory was won.

Czardom, on its part, was fated to provide these propitious circumstances. It destroyed the promise of the Duma and constitutional liberty. It goaded the sullen workers to cold anger, as "Stolypin's necktie" and the drum-head courts-martial removed their leaders, only to raise a hundred avengers for each prisoner who fell. And then, for a second time, it risked the test of war; for a second time, by defeats and retreats, by its mad finance and its inability to organize the supply of bread for the people and munitions for the front, it revealed its incurable incapacity. The women of the factory learned what it meant to stand all night in the queues that waited outside the bakers' shops. In the dim light of dawn they watched the sledges of the profiteers dashing home from balls and revels. And then, after a scanty meal of black bread, sleepless and still hungry, they would take their stand among the whirring machines, to earn the paper roubles that lost every day something of their value. Once more the factory was in the van of the revolt. Once more it sent its delegates to a Soviet. Through the months that divided March from November, it armed again and struck repeatedly, less for wages than for bread and peace and land. Its young men took their victorious stand in the fighting that won the Kremlin for the Revolution, and, year after year, it had the honor of returning Lenin at the head of the list of its delegates to the Soviet which governed Moscow through all the vicissitudes of civil war and reconstruction.

CHAPTER II

DEMOCRACY IN THE FACTORY

IVAN's story haunted me as I left the workers' club-house and returned to the offices, to learn something of the organization of the factory. As one man expounded the method by which the factory council is elected and another took me over the *crêche*, the gymnasium, and the library, it rang in my ears like a refrain. The essential fact, it seemed to me, was one which no one mentioned. The Cossacks are gone from the courtyard, and the snow at last is white. Nor did I wonder any longer, why, after tearing the Czar from his throne, it seemed necessary also to drive the owner of the Prohorovka Mills from his counting house. The Cossacks symbolized the alliance of these two.

On the business aspect of life in a Russian textile factory I will not linger, for industry is the subject of another volume in this series. Like all the larger concerns in Russia, this mill has been nationalized. On the productive side it is subject to a big organization known as the Textile Trust; on the commercial side a separately organized "syndicate" disposes of its manufactures. In spite of the use of such words as trust and syndicate, no private capital is involved, and the Russians intend only to convey that the industries grouped as "trusts" enjoy autonomy in the conduct of their affairs, though their profits go to the State. They are under an obligation,

however, to return at least ten percent of their annual surplus to the workers in the form of a welfare fund. Last year the Textile Trust did, in fact, assign as much as twenty-two percent of its profits for the benefit of its employees, and this considerable sum was spent mainly upon housing.

Industry during the early years of the Revolution passed through a period of chaos. The Civil War cut the mills off from the supply of raw cotton from Turkestan, and discipline among the half-starved workers was disastrously slack. The facts about the output of this factory suggest that its life is once more normal. With approximately the same number of "hands," eight thousand as in 1913, its output, in spite of the obligatory fortnight's holiday for every worker and the reduction of working hours from ten to eight, has risen from a monthly average of ten million metres in 1913 to 11.9 million metres at present. The machinery has not yet been renewed, though some new machines are now on order, but in other respects there has been substantial progress. The factory now runs on electric power, and some important additions have been made to its buildings.

Before the Revolution one sentence would have sufficed to describe the government of the factory. Like that of Russia, it was an autocracy which rested on the Cossacks in the courtyard. The structure is more complicated to-day. I shall not attempt to describe here the exact mechanism by which the two governing factors, prices and wages, are determined by negotiation between Trust, Syndicate and Trade Union, with boards of arbitration and the Supreme Economic Council in the background. In spite of the apparent complexity of these arrangements, the root fact is as simple as that of

pre-war days. The single power that inspires and harmonizes trusts and trade unions is the power which dominates the Soviets—the power of the workers themselves who wield it—it is important to remember, in alliance with the peasants and under the firm leadership of the Communist Party. With this preface, let us see how the Dictatorship of the Workers operates in this typical factory.

The ruling Democracy has, in every Russian factory and workship, its own selective committee or Works Council. It has three chief functions. It speaks for the workers in all their dealings with the Management. It administers the numerous social institutions grouped round the factory. It is also the body which plays the decisive part in the annual elections of the Soviets. The public life of Russia is based on two units—the factory and the village. In the factory grounds are located most of the centers of communal life, from the public library to the technical classes, which in Western lands are more usually established outside by the municipality. It is as workers of the factory that the citizens of Russia choose its governing Soviets by their votes. In the factory the ruling Communist Party organizes its *nuclei* (branches). One might make a curious and elaborate study of the Constitution which Russia has evolved during these ten years of struggle and experiment. But one simple fact is fundamental. The entire structure rests upon the working team as its unit. The factory, as it were, was the battalion in the army which made the Revolution. The Soviets were, in their original form, nothing more mysterious than strikers' committees. It is not theory, but the need in the hour of struggle for some living organization, which explains the supremacy of the factory in the Soviet System.

The method by which the Works Council is elected may vary somewhat from factory to factory. In the Prohorovka Mills (now renamed *Trehgorna* or "Three Hills"), the plan is that every five workers, grouped according to their crafts and occupations, choose a delegate to attend a General Conference. In smaller factories which have a hall or shed large enough to hold the whole body of workers, it is usual that all of them attend this meeting. Each craft or occupation—the mill employs, among its eight thousand hands, engineers, transport workers, and dyers, as well as spinners and weavers—exercises at this conference the right to nominate its candidates. Each name may be discussed separately. The election is by show of hands, but no candidate can be elected unless he secures at least half the votes of all the delegates. The Works Council has in this big factory fifteen members—women as well as men. Of these, seven, including the chairman and the secretary, are relieved from their tasks in the factory and give their whole time to the service of the men and women who elected them. They receive a uniform wage, 150 roubles monthly, which is rather less than those of them who are skilled workers would earn at their own jobs. The other eight members attend the committees of the Works Council but continue to work in the factory. The Council has its own office in the grounds, and its various functions are devolved upon sub-committees.

Its dealings with the Management fall to a "Disputes Commission" of three members, which regularly sits with three members of the administrative staff. It has the right to discuss every grievance of the workers, individual or collective. The three shop stewards (if one may use that familiar name) first sift the complaints

that reach them from the employees, and then, if these seem at first sight well-founded, carry them to the joint meeting. These cases include not only unjustifiable dismissals but demands for promotion and higher wages. The procedure is that each of the six members of the joint committee records his opinion on each case briefly in a book kept for the purpose. An agreed decision is often reached in this way, but, failing agreement, there is an appeal to the Trade Union which may lay the case before the arbitration board of the Moscow district, and from this again, in the gravest cases, to a national board.

To another sub-committee falls the duty of promoting efficiency. It may call attention to any slackness or fault of organization in the running of the factory. It may also adopt and advocate suggestions or inventions which come from the workers. It has the right, whenever it thinks fit, to call for a joint meeting with the Administration. It may, and frequently does, criticize members of the administrative staff on the ground either of inefficiency or discourtesy. On courtesy and humanity in the dealings of the staff with subordinates, Russians, alike in the factory and in the army, justly lay great stress. The old regime was hated, not merely because it was oppressive, but even more because it aggravated its oppressions by gross manners. Brutal language was habitual alike in the factory and in the army, and blows were much too common and went without redress. These inhumanities belong to the past, and if they linger anywhere, it is only because the too passive workers lack the courage to protest.

I tried to discover the attitude of the factory towards discipline. A judgment on that point is not easy for a stranger to frame. But I may quote the words of the

chairman of the Works Council. "Our workers," he said, "are not children. They will stand a strict administrator, and even admire him, but on one condition. He must be courteous. They are undergoing an education in discipline. The main point is that they realize that the factory is their own, and that its efficiency means their prosperity. Two tests you may apply. Our output is higher than in 1913, and there has been no strike since the November revolution."

At another cotton mill, a much more modern and better-equipped place than the old Prohorovka, I had some talk with the Managing Director, who was himself a former worker, a handsome, square-jawed man who combined a conscious sense of power with that calmness and courtesy which Russians value so highly, because it is not the commonest gift of the Slav temperament. He paid a high tribute to the services of the Works Council in maintaining discipline. It had not as yet hit on anything which could be called a new invention, but it had made some excellent proposals for the remodeling of parts of the machinery and for the better organization of work, which helped to account for the high output of which his factory boasted. A manager, he reminded me, works always with the knowledge that his men have the right to make reports upon him which his superiors will carefully weigh. He knows that he will be judged—partly, indeed, by his success in maintaining high output and good quality at a low cost, but also by his relations with his workers. But, apart from the new sense of freedom and self-respect which the workers enjoy, the Revolution has raised their cultural level and this has made them more efficient workers. He valued very highly the various social institutions associated with the factory, in which the team of workers

ceases to be a mere team that works the machinery and becomes a family leading its corporate life in a place which it regards as the common home. This system, he thought, did more than anything else to convince the workers that the factory is their own and to beget in them a sense of responsibility and some pride in its efficiency.

Plainly, the power of the workers to influence the administration of the factory goes far beyond the right to lodge complaints. The manager of each cotton mill is appointed by the Textile Trust, whose directors, in their turn, are nominated by the administration which rests on the elected Soviets. In practice these appointments are never made without the approval of the Trade Union, which, in its turn, will usually be guided by the opinion of the Works Council. The main duty of the Manager is to direct the team which mans the factory, and the quality which he must possess above all others is the gift of leading men. It is possible to recruit "specialists" on whose technical advice he may rely in dealing with machinery and processes of manufacture, and these men, though they are his subordinates, are often more highly paid than the Managing Director himself. The commercial aspects of manufacture do not directly concern him; these fall to the separate distributing agency, the Textile Syndicate. This sub-division of work makes it possible for him to concentrate on the problems of leadership, and explains the success which former workers often attain when they are promoted to those important posts. This is the case, I believe, in about half of the mills of the Textile Trusts. These promotions, indeed, are often made on the suggestion of the Trade Union or the Works Council.

At each of the three textile mills which I visited, the

manager was what Rusian workers affectionately call a "red director"—but one must have visited Russia to grasp all the associations of the magical word "red." It is, to begin with, the color which appeals most vividly to the Slav imagination. It is the color which every peasant woman uses most lavishly when she embroiders her blouses and her bridal costume. The word itself has, indeed, the double significance in the Russian language of "red" and "beautiful." And since 1917 it has won a still deeper meaning. It is the heraldic color of the socialist idea. It is lavished as a title of honor on every popular institution, from the army which won the civil war for the workers, to those directors who symbolize their victory in the factory. The Cossacks are gone from the courtyard; the Director, who has succeeded the autocrat who called them in, was himself a worker, and bears the homely title of "red."

The worker who seeks a sign that something is changed in his factory since the Revolution will find it in the big stucco villa which crowns one of the three hillocks within its grounds. It was the house in which the owner used to live. To-day it is a *crêche,* spotlessly clean and radiant with good nature, in which mothers may leave their infants while they are at work. The same thing, indeed, has happened all over Russia. The palaces of great industrial magnates in Moscow are now picture galleries or museums. Their country seats are sanatoria in which the workers spend their holidays and take their cures. In the villages the manor houses of the lesser gentry have been turned into club rooms and schools for the peasants. But I saw nothing quite so characteristic of the new Russia as the conversion of this comfortable villa into a day nursery for the workers' children. This nation is passionately preoccupied with

its own future, and it lavishes on its children all the care which its scanty means will permit. The task which Russia has consciously set herself of raising a new generation which will reach, in its sturdy limbs and athletic mind, the full stature of humanity, begins in this *crêche*, but the same purpose inspires all the social institutions of the factory. One may walk the streets in the business quarter of Moscow without realizing that it differs very sharply from any capital of Western Europe, save, indeed, by the daring gaiety of its religious architecture and the Slavonic untidiness of its older buildings. There are the same wares in its shops. There are the same contrasts between the rather rich and the very poor. In its restaurants, like a ghost from the old order, a beggar creeps mutely with outstretched hands round the loaded tables. Leave the streets behind you, pass a factory gate, and you will enter an intimate world where the real rulers of Russia lead their family life, governing themselves, sharing their studies and their recreations, and building the future in the common nursery and the common school.

The Works Council (or, as some translate its name, the Factory Committee) is an influential though not a ruling power in the productive work of the factory. Over the social institutions of the factory it has full control. These are its pride, and to develop them the workers are content to draw much lower wages than they might otherwise receive. In these institutions they realize themselves and satisfy their social instincts.

The child of a worker in the factory "comes on the strength" (to use a soldier's phrase) even before it is born. Its mother ceases work in the mill two months before its birth, and may not return until two months thereafter. During these four months, she receives, not

a meagre "maternity benefit," but her full wages. In textile factories, where fully half the workers are women, this means a constant shortage of from three to five percent in the labor forces of the factory; the whole charge falls upon the Management. At two months, the day nursery awaits the infant. It is under daily medical care (usually from a woman doctor); the nurses are well trained, and in the two *crèches* which I visited, the most scrupulous rules of cleanliness and hygiene were observed. The mothers, until the infant is weaned, have leave of absence from the mill, for intervals of half an hour, to suckle their babies. From the day nursery the infant passes to the kindergarten, and thence to the national school.*

The child attains the dignity of a worker in the mill at sixteen years of age. That phrase in some lands rings with bitter irony. In Russia the words "worker and peasant" are used much as old-fashioned Englishmen will talk of the "nobility and gentry." They are titles of honor. The child who is born into these ranks has the sense that he is growing up with power and opportunity before him. There are no barriers to cross; the road stands smooth and open in the factory and the State, in the army and even in the learned professions, if he has the ambition to serve his fellows. The children who have seen life opening before them since the Revolution, acquire instinctively this sense of power. I was talking in 1920 with a group of quite little children in a wood outside Moscow. A bright boy asked why England was blockading Russia. I answered the embarrassing question, and then came another: "Why do the English workers allow it?" The little fellow could not realize

* These are described in the volume in this series which deals with education.

that there could be any limits to the power of a working class. To enter the mill is for these lads and girls their initiation into great rights and duties.

During the first two years (from 16 to 18 years of age) the young worker spends only six hours in the mill. For three years and a half the apprentice attends a technical school. Of these apprentices under instruction there were in this mill about two hundred. Twice in the year these young workers undergo a thorough medical inspection. If they show signs of strain, easier work is given them or quarters may be found for them in one of the so-called "night sanatoria" where they are taught, without any interruption to their daily work, to lead a normal life and observe the laws of health. The medical inspection may also be followed up by an examination of the dwellings in which the adolescents live, and by some instruction on the spot in hygiene.

There was also in this factory (and this is now usual throughout Russia) an active pursuit of physical culture. No less than twelve hundred of the workers were taking some of the courses for physical training. There were in the grounds a running track and a skating rink, and two hundred pairs of skis for winter sports. There was also a gymnasium, a club for boxing, and a shooting gallery. The young women, as well as the lads, took their part in these diversions. For those who had intellectual ambitions, there was a course extending over eight months which was designed to improve the general education of young men and women who aspired to enter the *Rabfac* (workers' college). A direct road led from the factory to the University.*

* The *rabfac* (contraction for workers' faculty) is a college in which young workers of promise who have had only an elementary education are prepared, in courses extending over three or four years, to enter the University.

But the Works Council, in its concern for the health and education of the young, is far from neglecting the adults. For them also there was this year a compulsory medical examination, which was followed up, where necessary, by treatment. With illiteracy a continual warfare has been waged since the revolution, and among the town workers the illiterates have now become a mere residue; but a voluntary society exists in this factory for teaching adults (chiefly newcomers from villages) to read and write. Of more importance are the classes in which groups (numbering not more than twenty-five persons in each) of workers whose education is deficient, are instructed in arithmetic and other subjects of the ordinary school curriculum. Far beyond these elementary classes there are courses for skilled workers who possess a practical knowledge of their craft, in which the theory of the science which underlies it (chemistry or physics) is imparted.

A big club forms the center of social life in this as in other factories. It was well filled when I visited it one evening—chiefly by young people. The food in its restaurant was cheap and good. In one room piano practice was going on, in another singing. A reading room was well-stocked with newspapers and periodicals. Some of the members were playing chess, and there were many women in the sewing room. The library contained the Russian classics, but they filled only a few of its many shelves; the demand for such books, I gathered, is not great. The Russian worker of this generation has a practical mind, and he devours the treatises on the sciences, on history and elementary anthropology, on the Darwinian theory, on the origins of religion, and above all on Marxian economics, which pour from the soviet presses. Even the women, I was told, seem to prefer this

severe reading to novels. In addition to this library in the club there was also a system by which boxes of books were sent to the workers' homes. But the room in the club which interested me most was one in which members were invited to discuss with experienced helpers the difficulties which they had met in their reading. Two pairs of young men were busily debating their difficulties, and others were waiting their turn. They argued hotly, though with courtesy, determined not to be satisfied too easily or to take anything on trust. One was discussing a point in economics, and the other a difficulty in the Marxist conception of history.

I saw the little theatre which the club-house contains, but no performance was going on that evening. The Crafts, into which the workers in this mill are divided, have their "family evenings" on Sundays in this theatre, at which a play is acted or music performed. The dramatic societies, it seems, take their efforts seriously, call in professional actors to train them, and vie with one another to produce good work. There is also a full amateur orchestra of sixty-five players and a string band of eighteen players. It is a notable feature of Moscow life that the best of its orchestras—notably the wonderful "Persymphans" orchestra, which plays without a conductor—frequently give concerts for the workers in their own club-rooms, and find that a classical program is warmly appreciated.

My last glimpse was of a room assigned to a society which encourages aviation—in its military as well as its civilian uses. Several young men and women were making parts for a model aeroplane, and on the wall was a hideous poster symbolizing chemical warfare. This society popularizes these devilries of modern war, and collects considerable sums for the airfleet. One touched

the realities of contemporary Russia in this room. The blockade is still a living memory, and the Soviet Republic lives like a beleaguered garrison in a hostile world. No one is allowed to forget that the Revolution may again be required to defend its existence. One had, indeed, in this club, a sense of strenuous peace. It was a tranquil corner of the battlefield which strong hands had cleared and fortified. On the walls were pictures that illustrated the Civil War; portraits of the leaders were in every room, and as usual there was a corner dedicated to the idolatry of Lenin. If the Russian workers educate themselves, it is to carry on their struggle.

A full account of the social institutions grouped round a Russian factory would expand into a study of all that the Soviets are doing or trying to do for the health and security of the workers, whether by preventive medicine or by social insurance.* Every big factory has its own hospital, dispensary, and medical staff. There are sanatoria in the Crimea, the Caucasus, and elsewhere for sick and convalescent workers. Every worker enjoys his fortnight's summer holiday at full pay, and on the walls of the club-room were posters advertising trips on the Volga steamers. For workers engaged in processes which may in any degree endanger health, the holiday is for a full month, and hours are shorter and pay higher. The various benefits which are classified as "social insurance" add twenty percent to the wages bill of a textile factory, and when some similar services (chiefly educational) are added, which also fall on the budget of the factory, it is probable that the workers receive, in kind, benefits which add about twenty-five percent to the value of their wages.

* Another volume in this series deals with health.

Like every Russian factory this mill had its housing scheme. Housing is the sorest subject in Russia to-day. Readers of Tolstoy will recall his ghastly picture of the conditions in which the workers lived at the end of last century in Moscow, and Maxim Gorki has etched his studies of their physical degradation on our memories.

With such a legacy, an impoverished country, staggering out of the miseries of a disastrous civil war, could not hope to cope promptly. In Moscow the problem has actually been aggravated since the Revolution by the removal of the capital from Petersburg. On the other hand, house room has been severely rationed, and the quarters in which comfortable families enjoyed a superabundance of space have been divided for the benefit of the many. The congestion, however, is still acute and, in some quarters of the city, scandalous. The only mitigations of this misery are that there is no longer a privileged minority, and that the cost of inadequate and often uncomfortable and even insanitary quarters has been reduced, for those with low incomes, to an almost negligible figure. The landlord has disappeared, and rent is applied, under the direction of a committee elected by the tenants in each block of flats and tenements, solely to cover the cost of repairs and improvements. An elaborate tariff has been fixed which adjusts the rent to the income of the tenant. The minutely graduated sliding scale exacts the minimum from workers who receive low wages or salaries, and the maximum from the few who still contrive to live by what the new Russia regards as anti-social practices—the exploitation of hired labor, speculation, or the receipt of interest. There is a standard allowance of floor space for each member of the family, and an eloquent table specifies the large deductions which must be made from

the normal rent when a room is without windows, when it is "semi-dark," when it lacks water-supply, or electricity, or sanitation, or when it is a mere corridor or vestibule which gives access to other rooms.

There are two conclusions to be drawn from this table. It is an anatomy of misery, which reveals that, even after the one-privileged class has been severely rationed in house room, there remains too little to furnish even the barest minimum of sanitary housing to every inhabitant of Moscow. In the second place, it means that the new housing schemes have as yet scarcely begun to make an impression on this massive discomfort. Capital is so scarce in Russia that little attempt has been made to use national or municipal credit for the building of new dwellings. The usual method is that those who desire better or bigger quarters form themselves into cooperative groups, and by monthly payments finance the building of a block of flats. To housing schemes, however, the various Trusts contribute largely from their profits, and the greater part of the twenty-two percent of its surplus which the Textile Trust voted this year for the welfare of its workers went to assist building schemes. Some big blocks of workers' flats have been built since the Revolution in the grounds of the Three Hills Mill. In these, the fortunate families which inhabit them can lead a clean and self-respecting life. They represent an almost unimaginable progress when one contrasts them with the conditions in the older tenements, but alike in the space available and in the provision of modern conveniences, they are decidedly below the standard of similar workers' dwellings built in recent years in England or Germany. Russia is still a poor country, and its level of material comfort can rise substantially above the pre-war tidemark, only as the pro-

duction of wealth surpasses the low pre-war standard.

This rapid survey of the results of self-government in the life of a typical factory would be incomplete without some reference to wages. The textile industry was, before the Revolution, one of the worst paid in Russia. Its workers were usually peasants from regions whose poor soil and under-sized and ill-cultivated holdings drove them into industry. But living, as they did, with one foot in town and one in the village, they never made the best of either world. Wages were low, partly because the labor of children competed with that of adults, and partly because the family rarely relied on the wages which it drew from the mill as its sole means of subsistence. In nominal wages the textile trade shows a large increase, and has improved its position relative to other trades. At the end of 1926 the general level of nominal wages had just passed the pre-war line. Taking 100 as the figure in 1913, the average wage for all Russian industries stood in the last quarter of 1926 at 100.4 while the average textile wage would be represented by 121. But this increase was far from meeting the alarming rise of prices. The general price level in Russia stood at 220 for the economic year October, 1925—October, 1926, as compared with 100 in 1913. Even when we allow for the benefits in kind represented by social insurance (which may add twenty percent to wages), for the decrease in rent (which is said to be equivalent to an addition of four or five percent to wages), and for free education, it is obvious that even textile workers are financially in a worse position than before the war.*

* Allowing for these benefits in kind, the general index of remuneration would stand presumably at a little above 125, with the cost of living at 220. Even if it falls, as the result of the policy recently adopted, below

I have told the story of this mill at some length, because in its typical experiences lies the key to an understanding of the Russia of yesterday and to-day. It was because the Cossacks were called in to drive the cheated workers to their tasks, that the end came at length by violent revolution, and could not have come by peaceful means. It was because the mill owner had used the power of the Czarist State to oppress his workers that the owner in his turn was fated to disappear when the Czar himself had fallen. It is because the recent past of degradation and oppression is still a living thing in these workers' memories, that it seems to them so great a thing that they should govern themselves and manage their own lives.

It might puzzle an English worker to see these Russians proud and contented on the low wages which they bring to their cramped homes. He might not think

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200, the position is still sufficiently depressing. The average figure, moreover, conceals some painful contrasts in the position of various categories of workers. While the textile worker, for example, has risen in the scale, the miner has fallen, for his average nominal wage is only 78 percent of the pre-war figure. There is, moreover, a remarkable disparity between the wages of skilled and unskilled men in all trades. Thus a smith employed in machine construction will earn 99 roubles a month, a laborer only 50 roubles; a moulder in the railway workshops earns 90 roubles, a laborer 42. Even in the textile trade a spinner earns 69 roubles a month and a laborer only 42. But the most unfortunate workers are to be found among clerical employees in small towns, and among teachers in village schools, who may earn as little as 30 or 40 roubles a month. A country doctor may get no more than 40 or 50 roubles, and some of the younger qualified doctors actually prefer to seek skilled manual work. I heard of a woman employed in a responsible clerical post in a public hospital in a small town who received only 25 roubles a month, and this was not an exceptional case. These shocking contrasts are a dark shadow on Russian life. The Trade Unions are undoubtedly struggling to raise the position of the more depressed grades of workers, especially the unskilled manual workers. But no attempt has been made to fix any general minimum or living wage, and I fear that the professional workers have no advocates among the leading men.

that even the courtesy which they now enjoy from managers and overseers was an adequate compensation. That English worker has never felt a Cossack's whip on his back in the courtyard of the mill, nor has that English worker ever known what it means to hunger after knowledge and beauty and find a policeman in his path. Fatigue and poverty, ignorance and distrust of his own untrained mind, might keep him away from an instructive lecture. But he has never known what it means to close every aperture in the cellar lecture room, lest a ray from the tallow candle should betray it to a gendarme. He has now, for two or three generations, managed his own affairs without serious hindrance in his own Trade Union, and even to elect a Works Council with the wide powers of this democracy in the factory might seem to him a smaller experience than it seems to Russians. And just because the State, as he knows it, has not in our day felt any morbid jealousy when he formed associations for political, industrial, or educational purposes, there are in his mind no repressed social instincts which would rejoice, even amid poverty, at the creation in the factory grounds of a workers' club. The same phrases which define the socialist creed would be applauded alike by English and by Russian workers, but a savage and bitter experience has given to them in Russia an explosive power which in our day they have never had in Western Europe. But I shall moralize no longer on my account. Old Ivan, after he had told his story, sat back to enjoy a cigarette and a glass of tea.

"Yes," he continued, "it is quite true that in those days we were better off in some ways materially. Our wages in the last years before the war would buy rather more than they will buy to-day. But what is it that the

Scriptures say? 'Man does not live by bread alone!' We were dark and ignorant in those days. Why, it was not till I was put away in Siberia that I learned to read, and even now I write with some difficulty. But now—I can read all there is to read and no one will stop me. Yes, I've read all about Darwin, and many a book on the science of agriculture. I've even lectured about that in our village. And don't forget that though we may still lead a hard life in some ways, our children will be better off—morally, incomparably better. Look at the chances they have even now, poor as we are—the books and the music, the classes and the courses, at which any boy or girl, who wants to learn, can learn as much as any of the students in the old days. And even in the village, things are changing. After I had taken a course at the agricultural school, I came back and told them all about nitrogen and how plants feed. We did away with the strip system. We introduced a proper rotation of crops. We started harrowing the fields in spring. I told them that they planted their cabbages too close, and what is more I explained why. They wouldn't believe me. But I proved to them that I could get more out of the same space from three hundred plants than they got from twelve hundred. And now they're eager to learn."

"Yes," said his wife, "we live in an age of progress. Why, Ivan was working at twelve years of age and there was no school for him. And then we're free; we can say what we like. There's no flogging now. Why, I can remember when a man was flogged if he got drunk and stayed away for a day from work. And now, even in our village, the peasants want to learn. You see newspapers in every cottage, and even the women go to the

village library—yes, and they carry books home and read them."

Ivan and his wife had said their say. As I left them, the bright marble of the monument in the courtyard reflected a ray from an electric lamp. Tramping over the snow, I found myself noting its innocent whiteness.

CHAPTER III

A SOVIET ELECTION

A GENERAL Election was going on in Russia during my stay this year. Save for the reports in the newspapers, one would hardly have suspected it. Experience has bred in me a great respect for Russian achievements in every form of publicity, and I found myself searching the walls of Moscow for posters and cartoons. Nothing of the kind was to be seen. It was only after a minute search that I did discover, posted up on the door of a public building, here and there, a sober document known as a *nakaz*, in which the Communist Party of Moscow gave an account of its administration during the past year, concluding with the promises, couched in somewhat dry and conventional language, which in all countries are expected on these occasions. For any rival document, for any answering manifesto, for any of the competing jibes, witticisms, invectives, and slander, which in other countries are usual at such moments, one would have looked in vain. I will not pretend that I did look with any active curiosity. For I had long ago grasped the essential fact about a modern Russian election. What is elsewhere a riot of discord is here a device for registering unanimity. In other countries the sovereign electors choose their governors. In Russia they ratify their governors' choice.

When one has placed it on record that no organized

political party is allowed to exist in rivalry with the Communist Party, one has said almost all that need be said about these elections. The "Left" social-revolutionary Party, and the "Mensheviks" (Minority Social Democrats), did, indeed, survive for a time as tolerated rivals during the early years of the revolutionary period, but both of them have long ago disappeared "underground." There is no organization which could compile any alternative list of candidates, and if by mischance this were to happen in one electoral area, there could be no arrangement, even by clandestine means, to present lists of candidates of like opinions all over Russia. It might be contended that in theory this possibility does exist, but without the right to issue rival newspapers freely, or to print controversial leaflets, of what value would such a right be? "Election" may be the only name for these singular formalities which the dictionary allows, but it is not a happy translation. The Russian language has its idiosyncracies.

The underlying fact which explains this curiosity in elections is that the political system which prevails in Russia is not open to debate. It was set up by a *coup d'état*. It had next to be defended against armed opponents in the Civil War. It became the accepted basis of political and economic life, because during this civil war, after bitter experience of the alternatives, the masses of the population did on the whole rally to it, did on the whole defend it, at a terrible cost in blood and suffering, and did on the whole acquiesce in the leadership of the Communist Party. What was won at such a cost in life and treasure, that Party will not expose to the hazards of argument, or the chances of the voting urn. On that point the rulers of Russia are as frank as they are determined. Whether in fact a free election,

preceded by an equally free period of public controversy, would result in a majority for the system, one can only conjecture. My own belief is that a decided majority would ratify it. The question, however, is academic; the experiment will never be tried. The Communists are content to argue, as they have every right to do, that whatever the arithmetic of heads might show, the arithmetic of wills proved, against immense odds during the Civil War, that the mobile and effective weight of the Russian people is on their side.

We are apt, I think, to exaggerate the extent to which they differ in their practice from the defenders of other systems, who profess an unlimited loyalty to democracy. Could the Declaration of Independence be made an issue at an American election? Save in minor matters of legal interpretation, can one conceive an extensive and fundamental alteration of the American Constitution without a civil war?

If the critics of the Soviet system enjoy no scope, one must not forget that, up to the close of 1920, they fought with the aid of foreign subsidies to overthrow it, and that to this day their organizations abroad omit no opportunity of arousing foreign hostility to it. These are not the conditions in which democracy can thrive.

No large issues of policy are ever settled at a Soviet election. When necessity does require a sharp change of policy, it is invariably within the ranks of the Communist Party, and not at the elections for the Soviets, that the controversy is fought out. The business of an election is rather to choose persons who will carry out the day to day work of administration. The entire structure of the Soviet system lends itself naturally to this limitation. Only the local Soviets (the word, of course, means simply "Council") at the basis of the pyramid

are directly elected by the masses of the citizens. The national and federal Soviets at the apex of the system are chosen by indirect election, and to these alone belong legislative functions and the right to approve or reject any large change in national policy. The town and village Soviets, which are directly elected, are municipal authorities whose range of action and methods of work do not greatly differ from those of municipal bodies elsewhere. As in all the Soviets, from the bottom to the top, the various departments of the administration are directed by standing sub-committees, and every member of a Soviet has an individual task to perform in controlling or inspecting some of the public institutions or activities for which the Soviet is responsible.

The atmosphere of a Soviet Election in Moscow is, accordingly, rather nearer to that of an English municipal election than to that of a Parliamentary General Election. The problem is to choose practical men and women who will administer with good sense, in accordance with the prevailing views and interests of the electors. They must be in sympathy with the accepted system, but they are not necessarily members of the Communist Party. In the country, indeed, though rarely in the towns, the majority in the lower Soviets is usually "non-party," a phrase which usually implies some degree of sympathy with the Communist Party short of membership or the acceptance of its discipline. When one grasps these more or less inevitable limitations, the method by which the members are chosen seems rather more natural and rather less unreal.

The "Soviet" conception of citizenship is based, of course, upon work and not upon passive residence in a given electoral area. This idea sprang rather from the necessities of the class struggle than from theory, and

it cannot be carried out with any precise symmetry. It works best of all in the towns, where each factory or workshop is a natural unit which elects its members to the municipal Soviet. But housewives, and men and women who work single-handed or in very small groups, have to vote by districts, very much as people vote elsewhere, while in the country the villages or small group of villages form the unit. The life and driving force of the system, however, comes from the factory. There it had its origin; there it found its ironsides in the Civil War; and thence it still draws its most active and zealous supporters. Let us see, then, how they voted in the "Three Hills" mill which we have already explored.*

On the walls of the factory, when I visited it, some days before the actual election, two lists of candidates had been posted, who sought election to the Moscow City Soviet, and to the less important *rayon* (ward) Soviet. There were also shorter lists of "substitutes," who would take the places of the elected members in case of death or prolonged absence on other duties. The factory had the right to return one delegate for each 600 of its workers; its allowance was, in fact, fourteen members. The singularity of this list was that it contained fifteen names. At their head stood Lenin. He had been their member while he lived, and they still paid to his memory this touching homage. They would have laughed unpleasantly at the orthodox conception of immorality, but for them the dead hero still lived in his works, and in the hearts of his followers. I thought of the Greek fishermen of the Aegean isles, who will hail one another after a storm with the traditional greeting

* It was by accident rather than design that I chose a textile mill for study. The fighting and ruling forces of the Soviet State were drawn rather from the metal workers.

"Alexander lives and reigns." After Lenin's name came that of Rykoff, his successor as chairman of the council of Commissars (the Russian Cabinet). This factory had been the pioneer in the revolutionary struggle, and it claimed the honor of returning the active head of the Soviet administration as its senior member. The remaining names were all those of workers or former workers in the factory. Seven of the fourteen were, as the list showed, members of the Communist Party; one was a member of the Communist League of Youth, and the rest were "non-party." Three of the fourteen were women.

Here, then, was the official list, containing a bare majority of professed Communists presented to the Electors for their ratification. There was no alternative list. By what method had it been compiled? The first step is that each member of last year's Soviet (the elections are annual) who desires to stand again, presents a report on his or her activity. A meeting then takes place between the Works Council and three hundred delegates, who represent small groups of the various categories of workers. At this meeting names are put forward, and there often follows a thorough discussion of the record and reputation of each. There is usually a vote on each name. In this way the first draft of the official list is compiled, under the supervision of the Works Council. It then goes before separate meetings of the various crafts in the factory, and at these it may be modified. In its final form it is a selection presented by the Works Council to a general meeting of all the workers in the factory. At this meeting it is still theoretically possible to oppose any name in the list and to put forward another name to replace it; but of this right the electors rarely avail themselves, for the good reason

that the preliminary procedure by which the list is prepared, does furnish some guarantee that it corresponds, on the whole, with the wishes of the electors. They are not consciously settling big issues of national policy, nor are they even directly choosing legislators. They are choosing average, trustworthy citizens, who will see that the administrative machine of the city runs efficiently for the common good of the working population. The atmosphere of the election and, indeed, of debates in the Soviets themselves, is strangely remote from "politics" as Western democracies conceive them. A big family, animated by a single purpose, sits down on these occasions to administer its common property.

The factory produces its own newspaper, *The Spur*, which appears fortnightly and is written entirely by workers under the direction of its branch of the Communist Party. Its contents during the election week are, perhaps, as good a sample as one could find of Soviet politics, as the average town worker sees them.

The number opens with a leading article in which every elector is summoned to take part in the elections. In the villages, we are told, sixty-five percent of the electors voted last year, in the factories eighty-five to ninety-five percent. There follows a commonplace appeal to close the ranks against the enemies of the working class and of the Soviet Government, and to vote for the lists of the Communist Party. Much more characteristic is a version of this appeal in rough rhyme;

> "Comrades, remember Ilyitch's (Lenin's) watchword. The time is ripe for every servant girl, while she is still in the kitchen, to learn how to govern Russia. The tasks before us are the practical work of building houses and increasing our output. We

have many a hardship still to endure, and Russia needs you all. If you feel yourselves ill off, then elect active members of the Soviet to better your case. You are yourselves responsible for your own lot. Don't leave the work to others. Be bold, choose conscientious men who will carry out Lenin's ideas, and then be sure that your hardships will vanish and poverty disappear."

The heavy, business-like part of the election literature consisted in the official report of the Communist Party on the years' work of the Moscow Soviet. It claimed that the Party had fulfilled its promises. It had increased the output of industry, bettered the conditions of the workers, and kept alive the unity between workers and peasants.

Industry within the county ("government") of Moscow, which is one-fifth of that of all-Russia, produced, in the fiscal year 1924-5, some 1,540 million roubles. The corresponding figure for 1925-6 was 2,150 millions, an increase in output of forty percent in the year. (One may remark that these are not delusive values, for prices were on the whole falling.)

Employment also had increased. In these two years the number of workers employed in industry in the county had risen from 358,400 to 436,800, an increase of twenty-two percent. Compared with pre-war figures, this meant an increase of thirteen percent.

The building and equipment of new industrial plants was going on rapidly. In the former year 13.4 millions were spent on this purpose, and in the latter year 28.8 millions. The estimates for the present year provided for an expenditure under this head of 33 millions.

There followed some statements which were rather

less precise, as to the provision of new dwellings, drainage, electric lighting, and water-supply for the workers' districts. The maintenance of the aged and infirm had been improved; one could note a gradual increase in real wages. Some burdens of taxation (especially on houses) had been lightened. Finally, to encourage farming, a fund of one million roubles had been created which would help to provide live stock and horses for the poorer peasants.

The peroration of this very practical document boasted that these results were due to the participation of the "broad masses" (a characteristic Russian phrase) in the work of governments, "a thing possible only under the Soviet system."

The similar report on the work of the Ward Soviet was on much the same lines. It contained one reference, however, to the aesthetic side of life—trees had been planted to beautify the streets. It noted considerable activity in summoning small private employers (*Kustari*) for breaches of the labor code.

The rest of the election news consisted of the reports of some of the retiring members of the Soviet. At the risk of wearying the reader, I shall give a few summarized extracts from these documents. Simple and even naive though they were, they seemed to me to reveal in rich, homely detail, more clearly than anything else that I met with in Russia, how in practice "the Soviet works." They may not be unbiased records of what these elected persons did, still less of what they failed to do. But they are outline portraits of these deputies as they hoped the electors would see them. They show incidentally how frank criticism may be under the Dictatorship.

No. 1 (a woman) was responsible for inspecting the houses of the old-age pensioners. She got their daily ration of white bread increased by half a pound, and saw that better meals were provided for the consumptives. She was distressed by conditions at the Labor Exchange; many demobilized Red Army men had failed for two years to get work; some workers fainted while waiting at the Exchange; the present manager is not the right man for this post.

No. 2 (a man) occupied himself with education, and stressed his insistence that preference should always be given to the children of the workers.

No. 3 (a woman) claims that, as the result of her inspection of eighteen schools, the expenditure on food, per month, per child, was raised from fifteen to twenty-three roubles.

No. 4 (a man) worked in the health section. He advocated a dispensary for venereal diseases and an increase in the number of beds both for adults and children. He was responsible for sending sick children to Yalta in the Crimea, and got an additional dispensary opened for the tuberculous, making the thirteenth in our district. He got a workshop for winter use built in the home for children addicted to drugs (these pitiable little wretches are mainly orphans of the civil war and the famine, who for a time ran wild in the towns). He also insisted that less monotonous work ("fancy" sewing instead of making sacks) should be provided for the women who are being reclaimed in the home for prostitutes.

No. 5 (a woman) insisted that bed-linen should

be changed monthly instead of fortnightly in the eye hospital.

No. 6 (a man) found many cases in small private workshops in which lads under eighteen were working over eight hours; the employers were prosecuted.

No. 7 (a woman) inspected five factories and found one in which there was no hospital. The workers had to walk seven versts to the nearest. This was remedied.

One does not wonder that expenditure increases, and that the central government is compelled from time to time to swing a ruthless economist's axe. But while the direct expenditure on the workers' children goes up, one notes no corresponding pressure to raise the wretched salaries of the teachers. The Soviet brand of democracy has been no more successful than our Western type in correcting this defect in its mechanism.

The final stage in a Russian Election is the general meeting which adopts the candidates and gives them their mandates. I missed this solemnity at the "Three Hills" factory (which, of course, elected the official list according to plan), but I do not doubt that what happened there resembled very closely the meeting which I attended at a big engineering works in Moscow. It employs about two thousand men and women and returns four members. The factory gates were carefully closed, for it was fulfilling a military contract, but an efficient pilot soon conducted me to the big work-shed in which the election meeting was going on. Planks had been placed upon barrels, and the big audience, part of it standing, part of it sitting, was listening attentively to an orator in a very simple khaki uniform.

He had obviously some connection with the Army, and I was wondering whether he was a private or non-commissioned officer when my pilot informed me that he was Vorosilof, the Commissar of the Red Army, or, as we should say in the West, the Minister of War. I was soon on the platform watching the faces below me.

There were many more men than women, and most of them seemed young or in the prime of life. I should guess that practically all the two thousand worker-voters must have been present. No speaker could have desired a more attentive audience. All felt, for the moment, alike; all were workers, and Russians; all had the same interests; there was no gap between speakers and audience, which also means that there was no gap between the workers and their government.

Part of the speech dealt in an optimistic mood with the determination of the government to lower prices; but the greater part of it was an answer to the note of remonstrance and menace which the British Government had just addressed to Moscow, by way of protest against its propaganda. Vorosilof was not bellicose, but he was firm in his assertion of the right of Russians to speak their own minds, in their own country, even about the British Government. The Soviet Government, he insisted, had not interfered in China, but Russians would make no secret of their sympathy with the masses of the Chinese nation in their struggle for liberty.

At the end of this speech (as at every pause in the proceedings) a military band played a few bars of *The Internationale*; the chairman asked the audience if it wished to discuss the speech, and, when hands showed that it had no such wish, the real business of the day began.

First came a deputation from the biggest textile mill

in Moscow, the Three Hills Factory. A woman announced that it had elected the Communist list unanimously, and she urged us to do likewise and so give Sir Austen Chamberlain his answer. The band played, the audience cheered, and it was obvious that no further eloquence was needed.

The chairman then asked us if we had all read the *Nakaz* (manifesto). Our hands said "Yes." Did we agree with it? "Why, yes, of course," again said all the hands. Did we want to add anything to it? It seemed that we did. The textile factory wanted us to demand more tramway lines, and to insist that more room should be found for workers by limiting the number of "Nep men" (profiteers) who might inhabit any tenement, by ten percent. Why not?

Two rather handsome young girls of the "Pioneer" organization, resplendent in red ties, then came forward with two amendments. They insisted that more should be done for the homeless children of Moscow, and—could one conceive such a thing outside Russia?—they wanted more teaching of foreign languages in all schools. That, they maintained, was essential if we were to be good internationalists. We voted again and the proposals of the Pioneer girls were adopted. As they voted, they held their hands above their heads with their five fingers spread out—a naive symbol which means in their ritual: "The five Continents of the earth are more to me even than my own land."

And then at last came the election. The Works Council (the standing council of shop stewards) had a list to propose to us. The name of Vorosilof headed it in an honorary capacity, and then came four workers of the factory. We all cheered. We all assented. No one wanted to make any other nomination.

One read a glow of content and good fellowship on every face, and, as the proceedings closed, a private of the Red Air Force came to the platform and declared that if a rupture should come with Great Britain, he and his fellows would do their duty. I could not imagine a parallel proceeding at home. With us, privates do not speak as the equals of the Minister of War from the same fraternal platform.

A little startled, I began to realize that the election was over. It was exactly like what we call at home an "eve-of-the-poll rally." But with us, when we hold such a demonstration, we have the uncomfortable knowledge that at the same moment, in another hall, our opponents are holding an exactly similar meeting. In Russia it has been discovered that the other meeting is superfluous.

Its civic duty over, the audience felt genial and expansive. It formed itself into a procession, with the band at its head, and tramped to the House of the Moscow Soviet to demonstrate against the British Note. A big decorated car led the way, with torchbearers round it.

In the car, conspicuous in a silk hat, rose a youth who represented Sir Austen Chamberlain under arrest. A Red soldier guarded him, while a Chinaman and a not very convincing English miner triumphed at his defeat.

I think that in any event unanimity would have been attained, which, indeed, is the purpose of elections in Russia. But certainly Sir Austen Chamberlain helped us to reach it with more than the customary cordiality and good feeling.

CHAPTER IV

A VILLAGE AND ITS SOVIET

WINTER is not the season to visit a Russian village, and when I went exploring in the Central Provinces it was still winter. The fields were invisible under their veil of snow. The wild creatures were hibernating, and apart from the crows and the sparrows, the only birds were a gay group of golden-crested wrens, chasing each other like wayward sunbeams among the sombre firs.

Life seemed suspended save for the little peasant sledges that had worn a track in the snow. But even in winter one may gather some impression of the change which is slowly following the Revolution.

Central Russia was always a poor region for the peasant. Its soil is hungry sand. Here is none of the fabulous black earth, which fills travellers with envy—though even black earth, one may remark, is no match for science. The Prussian farmer will raise on his poor sandy acres twice the crops that the black earth yields to Russian ignorance.

Year after year, before the Revolution, statistics showed the gradual decline of the Central Russian village. It was rack-rented; it was savagely taxed. The money-lender preyed on it, and every year it raised fewer cattle and more meagre crops. This region could not supply itself with grain. It must import from the rich Volga or the happier South.

The village contrived to live by sending its men to

Moscow or its women to the textile factories, which are encountered in the most amazing places in the forest. Why were they there? The coal must travel hundreds, the cotton thousands, of miles. They were there because the soil was hungry and the peasants hungrier still; they were there because labor was cheap.

As I sat among the peasants in the little village of Bogomolova, five versts from Vladimir, and plied them with questions, I realized that the tide had turned. They have begun to think that farming is worth-while.

Before the Revolution each family, on an average, raised grain enough to keep itself in bread for five or six months. Now, among its 140 families, there are only ten which fail to grow sufficient grain for the whole year, and some have a surplus.

Before the Revolution the village had 96 cows; now it has 158. Its horses also show a big increase (40 per-cent), and it has begun to market butter, eggs, and wool through its Cooperative Society. What is even more noteworthy, it eats its butter—a new social fact in peasant Russia. But, indeed, the peasant's table is now the destiny of much of the food, especially the grain, which used to be exported—an awkward development for the Russian balance of trade. The village now cleans and selects its seed, and maintains a little communal plant for the purpose. It has also its communal water mill, and a communal smithy. It is proud, moreover, that it is beginning to grow clover—a new crop in Russia.

The foundation of this new prosperity was visible enough when the chairman of the village Soviet brought out the plan of its land. Before the Revolution the soil was divided into the usual long, narrow strips. One strip in three lay fallow every year, which meant that

it grew a rich crop of thistles. Year after year the same two or three crops grew in rotation on the same soil. To plough was to scratch the surface, and even farmyard manure was rarely used.

The yield of old-world agriculture in Roman times used to be, we are told, five times the seed sown. In this village their fathers used to reap four-fold. Before the Revolution the average yield had fallen to three-fold. No wonder the conviction grew that farming does not pay. The yield to-day is nine- or ten-fold.

Does Revolution, then, put new heart into the soil? In a sense it does. The soil, to begin with, ceased to pay rent and was at the disposal of the village. At first the old strip system and the three-year rotation survived. Czars might go, and commissars might come, but a peasant does not lightly change his ways.

The Communist Party, however, knows all the devices of propaganda. It issued its newspapers for peasants, teaching them meanwhile to read. It placarded the club and the reading-room, which it had provided for the village, with pictorial posters. It staged an instructive play in the room that serves for theatre. It used the children in the school (wonderful to relate, every child in this village is now at school) to teach their parents. This village, as it happened, had as yet no radio installation, but I saw these incredible innovations in many another village whose aspect had changed in no other respect for countless centuries. Needless to say, the educational possibilities of this invention are fully used. And finally, the Party organized excursions to model farms and pioneering villages which had already adopted the new methods of cultivation.

And so at last conviction came. These may be godless, new-fangled methods—priests and greybeards

might shake their heads—but they triple the yield of the soil. And so, with much effort, the consent of the two-thirds majority, which the revolutionary land code requires, was duly obtained. The strips vanished. Four immense fields took their place. By this innovation alone one-third was added to the land in active service.

Each field grows one crop, and the crops follow each other in a seven-years rotation.* Nature has proved herself no counter-revolutionary. The nine-fold yield is a fact, and henceforth only a very lazy or a very unlucky family need buy bread. Not content with intensifying its agriculture, Bogomolova had also added nearly one-fifth to its cultivated estate by bringing waste land, which had once been forest, under the plough. What has happened in this village has happened already over one-third of the area of the province, and the pace of innovation quickens.

As I listened to this story, I had been turning over in my mind how I should test the political sentiments of the village. Did they sigh for the old days when they paid rent out of a third of their present crops? I asked if a free vote would show a majority for Czardom. For answer the chairman, who was not a Communist, read out a resolution passed unanimously at the recent election meeting. It pledged the village to accept the leadership of the Party "on the road to Socialism."

Was it spontaneous? Was it sincere? Why not? If a revolution can cause three ears of corn to grow where one grew before, why should peasants hanker to undo it?

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* These big fields are not as yet cultivated collectively. That may well happen, however, if the village should become prosperous enough to acquire a tractor. At present each family cultivates its own patch in the big field, but must grow the prescribed crop according to the system adopted by the village meeting. The size of each holding varies with the number in the family, but the unit for each inhabitant is the same.

This brief sketch of life and progress since the Revolution in the village of Bogomolova may serve as a companion picture to our study of the Three Hills Factory. But the facts of village history are more difficult to unify. Each peasant led his own life, working on his own fields in isolation. Each, it is true, was affected by the same economic and political conditions. But they had never been fused, as the mill hands were, into a battalion which felt and acted as one man. Over great parts of Russia (though not, as it happened in this village) they twice rose in a savage *jacquerie* to assail their landlords and seize the land. The rising after the Japanese war was easily suppressed, for the peasants then had no arms; in the revolt of 1917 the landlords, for the most part, were driven to the towns, whence they usually fled abroad. But these experiences, vivid and passionate though they were, did not avail to knit the peasants into a solid mass, such as the continuous organized struggle in the factory made of the town workers. Partly for this reason, partly because of their intellectual backwardness and illiteracy, and also by reason of the great distances which separate the villages from each other and from the towns, the peasants were in the main sleeping partners in the Revolution. It happened to them, but the town workers made it. It has had to consider them and to humor them, but it was never their work.

None the less, a glance at the social history of any typical village would show social contrasts which recall the more dramatic transformation in the mill. Here, too, the central fact is the disappearance of the superior class, whose pretensions degraded, as their claims impoverished the village. The landlord is gone, which means not merely that the payments of land-purchase installments on rent have ceased, but also that the

peasants' self-respect is no longer depressed by the arrogant manners of "their betters." Those who have read Tolstoy's terrible description of the descent of a body of troops upon a village to assist in collecting arrears of taxes, will realize that the peasants, also, had felt the whips of the autocracy on their bare backs. The peasant, moreover, has been relieved of all the terror and of most of the burden of military service. In the old days (one recalls the poignant verses of Nekrasof) the village wailed over the departure of a conscript almost as it might lament a death. It dreaded not merely the long absence of its sons; it shrank from the degradations and the savage punishments of the old army. The Red Army, on the contrary, is popular—to enter it means opportunity, promotion, and education. Its term of service, moreover, has been reduced to two years, and its numbers cut down by two-thirds. A million peasants' sons work in the village, who before the Revolution would have been in barracks.

The village, moreover, like the factory, has won self-government. In the old days authority was represented by a police official, whose morals were often as low as his manners were harsh. To-day the village manages its own affairs through its elected Soviet. There are nine persons in this Soviet, of whom four are women, one for every hundred inhabitants. The village reckons 140 families (737 persons) and with it is grouped a hamlet containing 44 families (229 persons). As in the factory, there are preliminary meetings of unofficial groups to discuss the nomination of candidates, and thereafter their records and opinions are publicly debated at meetings of the whole village, before it finally assembles to vote.

I was too late to witness any village elections, but I

gathered that the contest is hotter than in the towns. There is here a real struggle, not, indeed, between organized parties, but between clashing interests and sections of the peasant class. In many villages a sharp line divides the richer peasants, who possess some capital in live-stock, machinery, and hoarded money, from the poorer peasants, who live from hand to mouth. The public debates at the election meeting are often heated, and racy with rustic humor. The Communist Party, of course, does its utmost by preliminary propaganda to influence the elections, but it cannot be accused of pressing the claims of its own members unduly. It had nineteen full members in this village and thirteen members of its League of Youth. But none of the former and only two of the latter sat on the soviet. Even the Chairman, a man of notable energy and ability, who had been the leader in agricultural progress in the village, was not a Communist member, though he obviously was in general sympathy with the Party.

The Chairman of the village soviet is its Executive Officer, and he receives a salary for filling this responsible post. The weak point in the political education of this, and, indeed, of most villages, is that the women are only slowly gaining an interest in public affairs. While 76 percent of all the electors voted, only 40 percent of the women did so. The persons disfranchised in this village under the Soviet constitution numbered only nine out of the 966 inhabitants, and included a former Czarist policeman, the local priests, and some persons who offend against Socialist morality by dealing in horses.

The Soviet, in a small compact village like this, has two chief functions. It elects the members (in this case three) who sit on the more important soviet of the parish (*volost*). It also administers the social institutions

of the village, the school, the club, and the rest. But all important matters are in practice referred by the Soviet to the village Meeting, which every elector may attend. A new bridge had to be built, when I visited Bogomolova, and a meeting was about to be held to decide whether the men should go with their horses to the forest to fell the necessary timber in the traditional way, or accept the offers of a cooperative group (*artel*) which was willing to do the work under contract. I gathered that the decision was likely to be in favor of employing the expert *artel*, a notable step in economic progress.

A village which governs itself in this way by mass meetings is realizing the earliest and simplest conception of democracy. A peasant who talks with a foreign visitor about life since the Revolution is sure to say at some point of the conversation, "Now we are free." That is not the accepted view outside Russia. In the village, as in the factory, one learns to understand it. And village and factory are the foundation of the whole structure. At its head, as every peasant is proud to remember, is the President of the Russian Republic, Kalinin, himself a peasant by birth, and half-peasant, half-smith by trade. They travel by the thousands to present their petitions to him in Moscow. When one has watched this simple, genial, little greybeard, in his shabby suit of blue serge, moving with his winning air and twinkling eyes from group to group of these petitioners, a peasant among peasants, one comes to share their instinctive confidence.*

There are, however, some hard facts to face before

* This right of individual petition is a relic of traditional habits, of which the Soviets have wisely made the most. Forty thousand petitions were presented last year, and after investigation, 35,000 of them obtained satisfaction in some degree.

one may venture to draw even a cautious augury from the progress which Bogomolova has realized. For it was obviously a more than usually go-a-head village, in one of the more progressive counties of Russia. The Vladimir Government is relatively poor. Its soil is wretched, and the textile industry is not, even yet, one of the better-paid trades. But it is an intelligent and ambitious region, and the mingling of industry with agriculture has quickened the brains of the peasants. But, even in this county, only one-third of the villages have as yet adopted the system of the four big fields and the seven-year rotation of crops. Considering the whole area of Russia, including the vast regions in the North where agriculture can never be more than a subsidiary occupation, not more than one-tenth of the whole area has yet adopted any modern form of cultivation. Many a year will pass before even half of the whole country comes near to European standards.

The fact is, of course, that the War, the Civil War, and the Revolution very nearly ruined Russian agriculture. The War took the cultivators from the soil, and led to an alarming reduction of acreage, livestock, and, above all, horses. Still more disastrous was the system of requisitioning crops for civilian as well as military needs, which prevailed up to the adoption of the New Economic Policy in 1921. The output of industry had undergone a catastrophic fall, and what it did produce was required for the needs of the Red Army.

When the peasants found that, in return for the grain which they must surrender, they could procure only trivial quantities of cloth and lamp oil, they retaliated by cultivating only just enough land to satisfy their own demand for grain. With the new policy (which Russians always call N.E.P.) a slow revival of

agriculture began, and production is now about ninety-five percent of the pre-war figure. Some part of the decline was due to the breaking up of the estates of the gentry, for many of those employed expert stewards and cultivated scientifically. Their disappearance was for a time an economic loss, as it was also in Roumania and the Baltic provinces, where the big estates were distributed among the peasants as a precaution to ward off revolution.

This loss can be made up only as the Soviet Government succeeds in its tireless efforts to educate the peasants in modern methods of cultivation. The resistance of their inertia is now in great measure overcome. Every young man who passes through the Red Army returns to his village a missionary of the new ideas, for instruction in the elements of agricultural theory and practice is given to every soldier. But there are material as well as intellectual difficulties in the way. One may grasp the fact that deep ploughing is desirable, but one must have a suitable plough, and that plough cannot be drawn by the undersized horses which one usually sees in a poor village. The State gives credit (by no means extended) to villages or cooperative groups which aspire to purchase a tractor, but there were at the opening of the year 1926 only 6,945 of these in Russia proper, and the annual increase seems to be only some 600 machines. Again, though great efforts are made to stimulate the interest of peasants in new crops, it is not easy to supply seed in the requisite quantities. At last the peasants are crying out for clover seed, and the demand far exceeds the supply. For it would be useless to import foreign varieties which would not thrive in the Russian climate. Two modified varieties have been evolved at experimental stations which suit Russian conditions, but an-

other year will pass before every peasant can be supplied with this new seed. These illustrations serve, in some degree, to explain what seems slow progress, when one compares the national record with that of a village which was fortunate in discovering an intelligent leader. The growth of peasant prosperity is not everywhere so striking as it has been in Bogomolova, nor is every village so near contentment with its economic lot. Villages which produce grain for the market have a heavy grievance, for, while the Russian price index for agricultural produce stands at 209 as compared with 100 in 1913, the index for manufactured goods was last autumn at 240. After a battle royal within the Communist Party, the decision has been taken to bring down the latter index by ten percent before June, 1927. The peasants understood perfectly well that they were being wronged by this unequal exchange, and in the long run their resentment might have made a political danger.

But in spite of the slowness of technical progress and the grievance of relatively low prices for his produce, the peasant has reason to congratulate himself on the material gains of the Revolution. He has achieved what had been for centuries his ideal and his spur in a series of bloody insurrections. He has got the land. For, although the legal ownership is vested in the State, he is for all practical purposes in secure possession of his holding, and reckons with certainty that his children will enjoy it after him. That is the gain which makes him, even when he grumbles, a loyal supporter of the new order against all attacks which aim at its overthrow. The tax, payable no longer in kind but in money, which is levied on his harvests, has been adjusted with much consideration to his habits and his income, and the poorest category of the peasants (about one-quarter of the

whole number) goes entirely free. In the old days, the peasants' average burden, taking taxation and land-purchase installments together, was 16 roubles per annum; he now pays on an average 9½ roubles. These figures, however, understate his gain, for the real value of the roubles which he must pay, has been more than halved in the interval. Neither sum seems large, but these primitive peasants produce most of what they need with their own hands and handle little money in the course of one year; to them even 16 roubles ($8) seemed a vast sum. The salt tax, moreover, has been abolished —an imposition which peasants at all times and in all countries (notably in India and in pre-revolutionary France) have resented with a peculiar and disproportionate bitterness. Further, from year to year, considerable sums are advanced to enable the poorer peasants to acquire livestock and other forms of agricultural capital. The State is taking permanent measures (for example, the development of drought-resisting crops, reforestation, and the planting of barriers of brush-wood to check sand-storms) to cope with the recurrent drought which scourges certain regions, notably the Volga Valley. Slowly, too, the condition of the poorer regions in White Russia and the North, which one can only call over-population, given the present low level of cultivation, is being remedied by migration to the rich plains of Siberia or to the Urals and the North Caucasus.*

* As many as 250,000 persons will be transferred in the course of the present year to Siberia at a cost of twenty-four million roubles, and six millions were spent on other regions. The system is that each group of five intending migrants selects a pioneer, who goes in advance to prospect and prepare roads, wells, and the like. These colonists are freed for many years from military service and taxation, and enjoy long-term credit on easy terms for the purchase of machinery. As the colonization proceeds, a parallel industrial development goes on in the towns of the new country.

The Revolution has, on the whole, obeyed Lenin's teaching; the workers, who are the ruling power in the Republic, regard themselves as trustees for the peasants' interests. The peasants, though with less exultation and a less conscious pride in their new status, have tasted in their turn the self-respect that comes with self-government and social freedom.

CHAPTER V

THE SOVIET SYSTEM

THE Soviet system was one of those innumerable creations of the human mind which seem to owe their existence to a fortunate historical accident. It has survived because it proved to be peculiarly well adapted to become the organ of that dictatorship of the workers which lies at the foundation of Communist theory and practice. When Lenin, with his comrades, returned to Russia from exile in Switzerland after the revolution of March, 1917, he does not seem to have perceived at once how valuable the Soviets would be for his purpose—or, if he perceived it, he did not instantly declare it. His first manifesto assumed that Russia would organize herself for the social revolution under the ordinary democratic forms. But the General Strike which overthrew Czardom had already revived the Soviets, which first came into existence during the abortive struggle of 1905. They were, as we have seen, simply strike committees which consisted of representatives of all the workers who struck, grouped, as was only natural, in their factories and workshops. The Soviets remained in existence after the strike had achieved its purpose as an engine for bringing working-class pressure to bear upon the Provisional Government, for the Duma had had no part in making the revolution, nor could it be regarded as representative of the Russian people. Lenin soon perceived

the aptness of the Soviets for his purpose, and conceived the purpose of making them the permanent organ of the working-class dictatorship. In the early days the Petrograd Soviet alone was of much importance; it sat in the capital, revived the tradition of the Paris Commune, and guided the Revolution. As the influence of the Communists (who had not yet assumed this name) rapidly grew, Congresses of the Soviets which had sprung up all over Russia served as the first improvised model of a national organization: representatives of the peasants were added, and eventually of housewives and other workers who were not included in the factories and workshops which constituted the original Soviets.

Thus, by a natural historical evolution, without the appearance of inventing anything artificial, the Dictatorship created its organ. The Soviets secured their influence, subtly and naturally, without at first challenging democratic theory, since the old Czarist Duma lacked all moral authority and the Kerensky Government made the fatal mistake of delaying the election of a Constituent Assembly on the basis of universal suffrage. As this Government revealed its weakness and its subservience to the Allies, "All power to the Soviets" was soon a cry which rallied the working class of Central Russia. Lenin timed his *coup d'état* before the Constituent Assembly could meet, and when at length it met, with the Communists in a minority, he first ignored and then dispersed it. The Dictatorship had already its own representative organs, which reflected (at least in Central Russia) the will of the workers. We shall see, as we go on, how well adapted the Soviet system was for this purpose. It is specially well fitted for the discharge of administrative tasks, and, in a Socialist State, once its basis is laid

down, the administration of the great complex of the nationalized industries is of vastly greater importance than legislation. In the second place, the indirect method by which the higher Soviets are elected, favors a well-organized party, while the workers, who directly choose the Soviets at the base, retain the belief that they are controlling the whole mechanism.

The Dictatorship is an inevitable phase in any Socialist transformation of society which has won its opportunity by armed struggle. The Socialist criticism of democracy, as it exists in capitalist countries, insists that its institutions inevitably distort the expression of the will of the workers, though they are everywhere the majority of the population. It gives them an illusory consciousness of power, while the real exercise of power belongs to the class which owns the factories, the banks, and the land. It can, by virtue of its ownership of the means of production, deny to the wage-earners the opportunity of work and therefore of life. The wealth of this class has given its members, if not a monopoly of education, at least an immense advantage in this respect over the masses. Their habit of command, their technical knowledge, and their social prestige dazzle and intimidate the minds of the workers. They use the schools to perpetuate their view of life, society, and property. The trained bureaucracy which administers the law and the whole apparatus of the State, is drawn from the propertied class, and on the whole reflects its views. But above all, by its ownership (with a few exceptions in recent times) of the press, the propertied class has the power to make the thinking of the workers and to distort their political judgment by its selection of news and its presentation of public questions. The result is that, even under uni-

versal suffrage, the will of the majority can be deflected, and subordinated to that of the owning and governing class.

Communists, therefore, refuse to rely on the use of democratic forms within the capitalist State to bring about the transition to Socialism. They are waging, even before the stage of revolution is reached, a class war which aims at transferring the reality of power to the majority of the population—the workers in industry and on the land. This can be achieved only when the ownership of the means of production, with all the direct authority and the subtle influence which it confers, passes from private hands to the control of the whole working community.

At some phase in this struggle (so runs the Communist thesis) the use of force is inevitable. A privileged class will always have recourse in the last resort to arms, in order to defend the rights of ownership on which the unequal distribution of socially-created wealth depends. During the Revolution, and for some time after it has won military victory, it must frankly exercise a dictatorship, treating the members of the former owning class as its avowed enemies, and denying to them their share in the exercise of influence and power. When the transition is completed, class itself will disappear, and the entire population, having abolished the privileges of birth, wealth, and unequal education, will consist of one class only, the workers, who will all make, by manual or mental work, their contribution to the common stock.*

* I must apologize to the reader for the brevity and crudity of this passage. The length and subject of this book forbid me to include any discussion of Socialist or Communist theory. Most Socialists, of course, in countries which have a long democratic tradition, argue that with adequate self-education and organization the workers may hope, under fortunate conditions, to use the forms of democracy to hasten the evolution of

The Soviet system was, then, in its origin, essentially an organ of the class struggle. It involves a repudiation of the territorial basis common to all forms of democracy. The source of the right of men and women (the sex discrimination has, of course, no place in any part of the system) to vote is not their ownership or occupation of property, as it was in the earlier forms of European Democracy, nor yet the mere fact that they passively inhabit a given area; it is rather their function, their activity in the performance of work, which is assumed to be useful to the whole community. That may be the secondary theoretical basis which the Soviet System has built for itself; but the real historical basis was, rather, that as workers these men and women belonged to the order which was conducting its warfare against capitalism, with the object of making itself the governing class. Communists reject with scorn the assumption of democratic theory that any expression of the national or general will can result from the use of democratic forms, so long as society lives under the class struggle. Like Disraeli, they see in every country not one nation, but two. Bucharin is amusingly frank. To the objection that the Soviet system fails to reflect the general will of the nation, he replies:

> Society to-day consists of classes with opposed interests. These classes can no more be reconciled than wolves and sheep can be reconciled. Wolves enjoy eating sheep; these must protect themselves against the wolves, and one asks whether, and if so how, it can be possible to employ the common will

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Socialism without bloodshed. A lively account of the Communist position, and also of the Soviet system will be found in Bucharins *A.B.C. of Communism* which has been translated into English. In quoting it I have made my own translation.

of wolves and sheep? Is there such a thing as a sheepish-wolfish will? Every rational man will say that that is an impossibility. There cannot be a common sheeps-wolves' will. There can be only one of the two, either a wolves' will, which enslaves the deceived and oppressed sheep, or a sheep's will, which snatches the sheep from the wolves and chases the robbers away. There can be no middle course. The relationship between the classes is just as clear. . . . They are mortal foes. What common will can they have? Some sort of bourgeois-proletarian will? . . . But in times of revolution the proletarian wills to transform the world, while the bourgeoisie would buttress the old slavery.

The Soviet system, then, makes no attempt to disguise its class character. Its formal and official title is the Workers' and Peasants' Government. Accordingly, we find this fundamental article in one of the earlier drafts of the Constitution:

> The third All-Russian Congress of workers', peasants', and soldiers'* Soviets lays it down that at present, at the moment of the decisive struggle of the proletariat against its exploiters, there is no place for these exploiters in any organ of the Soviet power.

This is the justification for the exclusions from the franchise, which were of considerable importance in the early days of the system and still survive. The general principle is that only workers are entitled to the vote; the term is defined to include peasants, intellectual

* The separate soldiers' Soviets afterwards disappeared. Soldiers now vote where they are quartered, with the rest of the population.

and professional workers, and the housewives of workers' and peasants' families. All of these attain citizenship and the right to vote, without distinction of sex, at eighteen years of age. The disfranchised inhabitants, in addition to persons convicted of disgraceful crimes, and the mentally deficient, include the various groups which are classed as exploiters:

(1) Those who live in whole or part by employing labor for gain. This does not apply to those who employ a domestic servant, nor to those who are training one or two apprentices.

(2) Those who live by "speculation" (a wide term) or, if there are any such in Russia, from the rent and interest.

(3) Certain groups which are held to be, by reason of their profession, the defenders of the old order, notably the clergy and former Czarist policemen.

After the immense social transformation which has gone on since 1917, the disfranchised are no longer numerous. About a million of the land-owning and capitalist class emigrated; many fell in the Civil War; of the rest the majority have found work as "specialists," clerks or teachers, and have thereby won their right to citizenship. If one may take the Vladimir "government" as an average case, I found that in the towns five percent of the adult population was disfranchised, but in the villages less than one percent. In a great town the percentage might possibly be a little higher, but over vast areas of Russia it cannot be much above the village figure. It could hardly make much difference in these days to the result of an election, so far as mere numbers go, if the exceptions to universal franchise were to be abolished. The case for maintaining it, however, is not so much that the "exploiters" are perilously numerous;

they might be dangerous rather by reason of their former prestige, their experience in managing men, and their higher level of education. Disfranchisement means, of course, not merely that they cannot vote; they may not attend election meetings, nor may they be elected to any Soviet. Disfranchisement is a stigma, which may be held to neutralize their former influence. There are, however, some hard cases, and the friends of a man who is a genuine worker, in spite of the fact that he employs an assistant, will often share his indignation at his disfranchisement.

The Soviet system would have provided a natural and logical basis of representation in any fully industrialized country which had adopted socialism. Psychologically, it has some great advantages over the territorial system. The workers in a big factory know each other; they have a common outlook; accustomed to daily association, not merely in work, but in study and recreation, they have a moral unity which the chance inhabitants of a quarter of a great city very rarely achieve. It is no mere metaphor to speak of their common will. It is no less important that they know the records and personalities of the men and women who aspire to represent them, far more intimately than voters in a big democratic constituency can usually know the candidates, even when they are local men. In an advanced country which had industrialized its agriculture on the basis of big farms employing many hands, the system might be extended also to the rural areas without heavy loss in the intimacy of its working. In Russia no big estates (save a very few model State farms) have survived the Revolution. The peasants do not work in common. On the other hand they do not live in scattered homesteads or little groups of cottages, as in

countries which have long enjoyed security. They live in villages, which, while they often straggle for a considerable length on either side of a road, do foster neighborly contact and a communal spirit. The village, as we have seen, is the unit in the countryside as the factory is the unit in the town.

But the Soviet system is not a symmetrical plan for achieving a just representation of whatever may be the opinions of the inhabitants of Russia. It is an organ of the class struggle. The peasants may be poor, and they may be workers, but they were not the pioneers in the Revolution. Save, indeed, that they seized the land with ready enthusiasm, they took little active part in it until, in the later period of the Civil War, their disgust with the "White" generals induced them to fight steadily under Communist leadership. Save for the more intelligent of the younger men who have passed through the school of the Red Army, the peasants do not possess the outlook of the organized workers of the towns. They grasp the aims of the Revolution imperfectly, and, owing to their lack of education and the immense distances over which they are scattered in a country poorly provided with roads and railways, it is not easy to keep them informed. Yet they form the overwhelming majority of the population. The leaders of the Revolution had to face the certainty that, if they gave equal representation to the villages and the towns, the peasants would soon swamp the revolutionary class, and the policy of the Soviet Republic would be based on some instinctive, old-world brand of individualism, short-sighted, conservative, and colored, perhaps, by the traditions of the most obscurantist Church in Christendom. Fortunately, the peasants had already accepted an unequal basis of representation in the early

days of 1917, when the congresses of workers' and peasants' Soviets first met together. It has continued to this day. Its basis is (if we take 100 as the unit) that 100 *voters* in the towns have the same voting power as 500 *inhabitants* of the villages. It is not easy, without an exact study of the census, to say what the real proportion is, for children are reckoned in the population of the countryside, while only adults are counted in the urban constituencies. The townsman's vote probably weighs about three times as heavily as the countryman's. Even so the peasants are in a large majority.

How, then, does the Communist Party, which exercises the Dictatorship, contrive to maintain its control over the Russian Republic and the Soviet Union? For its strength lies in the towns, though its membership in the villages is slowly growing. The secret lies in the system of indirect representation. Only the Soviets at the base of the pyramid, the town and village Soviets, are directly elected by the whole enfranchised population. The higher Soviets are elected by those below them. Thus the undiluted peasant vote is never available for the choice of the higher Soviets; it has always been mixed with the enhanced representation of the towns. This mixture, however, would be insufficient, were it not that even the villages return a high proportion of persons who, if not Communists, are at least in sympathy with the Party. These "non-party" sympathizers are on the whole less than a match for the trained, energetic Communists who are elected, and they have no organization behind them, even if they had the wish, when they voted, to give a preference to non-Communists. At each rung of the ladder, experience and organization tell. By the time one reaches the "government" or county in the hierarchy of Soviets, a substantial Communist

majority is assured, and after that step is passed, the dilution of "non-party" members is negligible. The process, with a solid party press behind it, works on the whole smoothly. There is no need for the exercise of any special pressure, for the rival parties which might have organized against the Communists have all been eliminated.

The hierarchy of the Soviets is built on a uniform and symmetrical plan, and, apart from some oddities in the nomenclature which make it difficult to translate, the ground-plan of the system is easy to grasp. The Soviet Government took over without alteration the division of the country into administrative areas which prevailed in Czarist times, though it has gradually been carrying out a redistribution. Each area has its Soviet. The smallest territorial unit is the *volost*, which one may translate "parish," though it is commonly much bigger than any English parish and may contain from seventy to one hundred villages. Next comes the *uyezd*, or district. But by far the most important of these units is the "government" (*gubernia*) which I have translated "county," though many prefer the word "province." There are thirty-two "governments" in European Russia, excluding the autonomous Republics, and of these the population ranges from 400,000 in the vast forest county of Archangelskoie up to two and even three millions for Moscow, Leningrad, and other more populous areas. The area which seems to correspond more nearly to "province" is the *oblast*, which includes a group of counties, but is of small administrative importance. It is in the county that the real work of administration is centralized. It has commonly a marked individual character, and may conceive big ambitions, and in carrying them out it enjoys some right of initiative.

The method of indirect election, starting from the village and the town Soviets, is as follows. The village having first elected its own Soviet, that Soviet in turn chooses its deputies for the *volost* congress Soviet, observing a rough proportion to population. The village Soviets also choose the *uyezd* congresses, electing one delegate for each of their own ten members. Each of these congresses of Soviets elects its standing executive committee, which meets in the long intervals between the sittings of the whole assembly. The chairman, secretary, and sometimes a third member receive salaries for their work.

The important "government" (county) Soviet, or Congress of Soviets, as it is more properly called, is elected jointly by the town Soviets in its area and by the *volost* (parish) congresses, in the proportion already explained; namely, one deputy for every two thousand electors in the towns and one for every ten thousand inhabitants of the *volosts*. It sometimes happens, owing to the timing of elections, that the *uyezd* congress, rather than the *volost* congress, is the electing body for the peasants. Its Executive Committee (*Izpolcom*, to use the Russian abbreviation) is a rather numerous body, which may number as many as fifty persons who specialize in taking charge of the various departments. Administrative work is divided among departments which correspond to the ministries (or, as they are called, *Commissariats*) of the Republic, so that each "government" has its own organization which works out a local policy for education, health, agriculture, and the rest, following, of course, the lines laid down for national policy. Some degree of initiative is possible, and something may be done to adapt national policy to local needs. But the autonomy of the "governments" is rather

severely limited by the fact that, save for the profits from those socialized industries which it administers and occasional supplementary taxes or surtaxes which may be levied for local needs, the "government" is not its own master in finance.* It depends on the share of the national revenue allocated to it from the center. But here, as elsewhere, the Soviet system preserves its leading characteristics. Neither in the villages nor in the larger areas, nor even in the important county areas, is administration left to a professional civil service. Just as in the village the elected chairman of the Soviet replaced the old Czarist authority, so in the counties the elected members of the Soviet have superseded the professional bureaucrats of the old regime. One need hardly say that the mechanism of these big administrative organizations cannot dispense with experts, secretaries, and clerks, but the elected members perform their duties, as a rule, in a painstaking and ambitious spirit.

Another feature which runs throughout the system is that the whole Soviet is divided into sub-committees, each charged with the control of some branch of the administration. Non-members may be coöpted on to these committees. The result is that every member has some definite work to do and feels himself responsible (as we saw in the reports of the Moscow members) for the welfare, it may be, of certain hospitals, or of a group of schools, or for the strict observance of the laws which limit the hours of work. The formal sittings of the Soviets are neither frequent nor do they extend over

* In the Vladimir government local taxes brought in only one million roubles, in a total revenue of over fourteen millions. By far the more hopeful source of local revenue would seem to be the profits of enterprises conducted under and for the County Soviet, which amount to thrice the yield of the local taxes. This county budget, I may add, is of interest because nearly half the expenditure is incurred for education and the health service.

many days. Some well-known national figure often attends from Moscow to expound national policy; the reports of the various departments are criticized; the budget is passed. But the real work of every Soviet member consists in the discharge of his administrative duties. It was proposed, for example, in Vladimir county (though I cannot say whether the proposal was ultimately adopted) that each newly elected member of the County Soviet should come up to the county-town and spend a whole week working in the office of the department in which he was specially interested, in order to familiarize himself with its work. There is a hostel for such purposes.

In turning from the local to the national government, there are several complications, which call for explanation. The vast territory which the world calls "Russia" is not a single State, but a Union of sovereign Republics, each of which has its own national government. Again, of these Republics which compose the Union, two are federations (Russia and Transcaucasia) which themselves include several autonomous Republics and territories. But the structure of all these governments, whether the Union itself, the federal Republics, or the autonomous Republics, is substantially identical. Let us trace it.

The sovereign body is in every case the Congress of Soviets. Each county sends its delegates. These are elected indirectly by the town and county Soviets which vote in proportion to population, following the ratio observed throughout, by which the voters in the town have five times the voting strength of the inhabitants of the villages, an advantage which may, as we saw, be in reality three to one.

The Congress meets, as a rule, once a year, for about

ten days. It is not, in the real sense of the word, the legislative body. It debates policy broadly, and passes resolutions which lay down the general principles to be followed in legislation. The atmosphere of its sittings is that of a great public demonstration. The Union Congress, for example, which has some fifteen hundred members, meets in the Moscow Opera House. The stage is occupied by the leaders and the heads of the administration, and speeches are apt to be big oratorical efforts.

The real legislative body is the so-called Central Executive Committee (known as the C. I. K. and pronounced "tseek"). It meets more frequently than the Congress to which it is responsible—in the case of the Union, at least three times in the year—passes the Budget, receives the reports of the Commissars (ministers), and discusses international policy. It, in its turn, elects two standing bodies:

(1) The Presidium of twenty-one members, which has the right to legislate in the intervals between the sittings of the superior assemblies, and also transacts some administrative work.

(2) The Council of Peoples' Commissars. These correspond roughly to the Ministers or Secretaries of State in democratic countries and are the chiefs of the administration. Meeting as a Council, they have larger powers than any Cabinet, for they may pass emergency legislation and issue decrees which have all the force of legislation. Save in cases of urgency, however, their decrees and drafts of legislation must be ratified by the Executive Committee (C.I.K.). In another respect they differ from the European conception of a Minister. Each Commissar is in reality the chairman of a small board of colleagues, who are his advisers. These advisory boards, or *collegia*, meet very frequently (it may even be daily)

to discuss current business, and any member of a board has the right to appeal to the whole Council of Commissars against a decision of the Commissar.

It remains to outline the subdivision of these administrative departments. They fall into three groups:

(I) Five of them deal with matters which fall solely within the competence of the Union. There are no corresponding Commissars in the allied Republics which compose it, though each of the Commissariats for Union affairs has its representative in the various Republics. These five departments, known as the Peoples' Commissariats of the Union, are:

(1) Foreign Affairs
(2) Defense (army and navy)
(3) Foreign Trade
(4) Transport
(5) Posts and Telegraphs

(II) The second group of five, known as the United Commissariats, are to be found both in the Union and in the various Republics which compose it. The Union Commissariat lays down the general principles of administration, and exercises a measure of control. But for these departments each Republic has also its own Commissar. They are:

(1) Labor
(2) Finance
(3) Workers' and Peasants' Inspection
(4) Internal Trade
(5) The Supreme Council of Public Economy.

The third of these departments is an original feature of the Soviet system, which recurs at every stage of the hierarchy from the top to the bottom. It is the department of audit and inspection. It verifies accounts. It inspects public works. It issues the most searching re-

ports, which often deal shrewd blows at official optimism. Its business is to detect inefficiency and corruption.

The fifth of these departments, the Supreme Council of Public Economy, is the most important organ in the Socialist State. Though a description of it belongs properly to the volume in this series which deals with industry, one may point out here the immense range of its responsibilities. Though each of the nationalized industries has its own autonomous organization, oddly named a Trust, it falls to the Supreme Council to coordinate their work. It sets the pace and fixes the volume of output at which each industry should aim. It is responsible also, as the last resort, for the fixing of the general level of prices. It is the final arbiter between the interests of the producers, organized in their Trade Unions, and the interests of the consumers. It has the last word when the price level of agricultural produce soars dangerously above or below the price level of manufactured goods and threatens discontent in town or villages. On its arrangements will depend how rapidly Russia can accumulate a surplus for the replacement and expansion of her capital equipment.

Working as a distinct department, though in close touch with the Supreme Economic Council, is an institution which must give to its directors the illusion of living each week through the Seven Days of Creation. Known as the "Gosplan," it is, in reality, the higher brain of the whole industrial system. Its business is, on the basis of all the available statistics, to forecast the needs and sketch the future development of the community. It may plan the expansion of one industry, or propose the concentration of another. It may outline the next phase of the titanic electrical development which was Lenin's chief interest in his last years. It may

propose some development, let us say in forestry, which will expand the exports of the Union. It may next make its schemes for the utilization of the profits of this venture, to purchase tractors, or what not. It must concern itself with the whole field of effort, from agriculture to industry and mining. Here is scope, which the greatest Trust magnate of the capitalist world might envy, for the imagination which plans and creates, boldly it may be, yet always within the fetters of reality, for it must scheme for a poor community which must eat and learn before it dares to set aside a surplus for future growth.

Each year it is busy in planning the tasks of the next. Though it works under severe limitations, it realizes in some measure the predictions which socialists have made, as to the gains which any community must reap, when it so far controls industry that it can plan for it as a whole, and so coordinate the growth of its various members.

The *Gosplan* is a Union institution, but autonomous copies of it, which collaborate with it, exist in all the allied Republics.

(III) Finally, we come to a group of six departments which are not included in the administrative apparatus of the Union, but exist only in the allied and autonomous Republics. The Union may lay down general principles which govern their work, but the whole administrative responsibility falls to the national units. These are the Peoples' Commissariats for:

(1) Agriculture
(2) Home Affairs
(3) Justice
(4) Education
(5) Health
(6) Social Welfare

It is obvious, in a territory so vast, with such a diversity of soil and climate, ranging from the sub-arctic North to the sub-tropical regions of Turkestan and Transcaucasia, that the dealings of the State with agriculture must be decentralized. Education also is left to the national Republics, for the obvious reason that respect for national cultures is one of the foundations of Soviet policy. The other departments, ranging from the control of the ordinary police (known in Russia as the "militia") to the protection of public health and the promotion of social welfare (the care of the aged, war-pensioners, and the like), deal no less obviously with matters of domestic concern.

To conclude what has been, I fear, inevitably a somewhat dry survey of a rather intricate administrative system, it may be well to emphasize some of its general characteristics. Russians claim for it that, as a representative system, it brings the rulers more closely and constantly in touch with the people than any other. That is true, I believe, of the foundations of the system. The town Soviets feel the life of the factory pulsing through them; the village Soviet is always in touch with the average peasant. But, above this stage, the various organs of government are confronted with a nearly insoluble problem. You cannot, in a country so vast, cursed as it is with primitive means of communication, keep your elected bodies in session for many days at a time, nor can you assemble them frequently. The higher Soviets are not properly Soviets at all. They are congresses of Soviets. They serve chiefly to keep the outlying districts in touch with the center. Their members listen with close interest to reports and disperse to the county again, carrying their impressions with them. A useful consultation has taken place, but little more can

be claimed for it. These meetings of congresses of Soviets cannot and do not bring to bear on the administration a sufficiently continuous scrutiny.

The absence of any organized opposition within the Soviets or outside them, is, needless to say, an aggravation of this defect. The real work of administration, and also of scrutiny, criticism, and control, falls to the executive committees. If they, in fact, remain in touch with the mass of the people, they owe it less to the merits of the system, than to the fact that they are themselves elected members and men of the people, and that they belong by majority to the Communist Party, which has developed the study of the mass-mind of the workers to a fine art. The unique and interesting thing about these executives is not the devious and indirect method by which they have been chosen, but rather the fact that men who have spent most of their lives as manual workers do contrive, by hard study and incessant application, to direct a rather complicated administrative machine.*

* By way of illustration of the working of the system, some figures from the Vladimir government may be of interest. It has 1516 village Soviets with 10,615 members. Of these only 6.4 percent are members of the Communist Party; 2.8 percent belong to the League of Youth, while the non-party members constitute 88.8 percent.

There are eight Soviets for suburban, i.e., semi-industrial districts, with 412 members, and here the percentage of Communists rises to 42.7, while 23.5 percent belong to the League of Youth.

In the town Soviets, of which there are eleven, with 1187 members, the Party has a bare majority; Communists 45.1 percent, Youth 5.3 percent.

On the executive committees of the *Volost* congresses, the non-party members have a bare majority (50.7 percent), but on the more important *Uyezd* executive committees the proportion is reversed (Communists 69 percent).

Finally, when we come to the most important body of all, the Executive Committee of the whole Government, we find that the Communists constitute 72.7 percent.

No less significant is the fact that out of the fifty-five members of this Executive Committee (four being women) no less than twenty-eight are workers, eighteen are peasants, nine are classed as employees (a term which

It may be well, in conclusion, to answer two questions regarding the system which often arise when one is discussing it theoretically. It is natural to argue that the plan of functional representation must emphasize sectional interests and obscure any broad view of the common good. If men vote as weavers or as metal workers, will they not think mainly of the special interests of their craft or trade? Is there not a probability, when men and women of all trades and occupations meet and vote together, because they inhabit a given area, that a broader view of the general good will emerge? The argument carries weight at first sight. I can only answer that I never saw signs of this narrow sectional outlook in Russia. For this there may be two reasons. First, each craft relies on its Trade Union, which is a recognized power in the Soviet State, to watch over its special interests. In the second place, the atmosphere of the election is made, and topics under discussion are, in effect, chosen, by the Communist Party, which, whatever else it may be charged with, cannot be blamed for a narrow outlook. Indeed, its unpardonable crime, to most of its opponents, is that it persists in mistaking the world for its parish.

Again, does not the system of indirect election debar the electors from any opportunity of debating or deciding the bigger issues of national policy? To some extent this is true. New departments of policy are decided, not at the elections, nor even in the Soviet Congresses, but within the councils of the Communist Party. On the

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includes clerks), while only four are "intellectuals" (probably teachers and doctors).

One may add that in the Vladimir Government, with a population of 2,282,000, the Communist Party has 12,000 members according to the recent census, including 2352 women and 3854 persons who as yet rank only as "candidates."

other hand, as we have seen, international issues are discussed even at village election meetings. But the main thing to bear in mind is that the problems of modern Russia are emphatically administrative problems. Speaking broadly, the various organs of the system, from the Council of Commissars of the Union down to the subcommittees of a town Soviet, are handling the same problems. Whether one sits in the Kremlin at a meeting of the most august body of the whole Union, the "C.I.K.," or round a table in Vladimir with the working men who constitute its County Executive Committee, one hears exactly the same problems discussed. How, before June arrives, shall we manage to reduce prices by ten percent? What growth can we show in the number of our spindles, or factories, and in the number of workers employed? When and how shall we make our final assault on the last relics of illiteracy? Or when shall we have room in our schools, even in the remotest village, for every child? Was it by good luck or good guidance that the number of typhus cases has dropped in a year by half? And, finally, how can we hasten the raising of clover seed, so that the peasants who, at last, thanks to our propaganda, are clamoring for it, may not be disappointed?

These are the problems of Soviet politics. With these, at least, every elector is encouraged to concern himself; with these the immense number of Russian citizens who pass, every year, for the first time through the constantly changing ranks of the Soviets, are obliged to familiarize themselves. The process of education is incessant. For, in one respect at least, these Communists are unique among the dictators who have figured in history. Their passion is to educate those whom they rule.

CHAPTER VI

THE SOVIETS AT WORK

THROUGH the guarded doors of the Kremlin, deputies and the curious public are drifting to hear a debate of the C.I.K., the Central Soviet which represents the whole population of the Union. One guesses at their many nationalities, as they tramp over the snow, while the dazzling sunlight sets the gay colors of St. Basil's Church dancing. The hall in which the four hundred assemble makes a dull background; it was, in Czarist days, the sitting place of the Supreme Court. The curious public seems to consist chiefly of earnest young men and women who have come to study the system under which they live. An ample and well-frequented stall, at which the literature of the Party is sold, testifies to their serious tastes. The speaking is rendered unattractive by the use of megaphones. But a phrase strikes me, and a distant scene comes before my mind.

The orator is talking of the marshes of White Russia. I had seen those marshes, in 1919, and again in 1920, first from the Polish and then from the Russian side of the frontier which had still to be traced in blood and fire. They gleam like an interminable lake. They must be crossed by causeways which only the experienced hunter knows. For miles beyond the lakes, the water soaks into the useless soil. I saw, on the borders of these lakes, a town which was literally starved; as one walked

through its streets, one was lucky if one did not meet someone who fainted and fell. Wrestling backward and forward, Germans* and Russians had laid this region waste, and then, born of the new hopes of the new time, the Polish and Bolshevik armies had repeated the old ways of the old world. I thought of a Jewish village where the survivors of a Polish pogrom sat among the ashes of their village and talked of Zion and New York. I saw the broad strips of land, on which the young fir trees were growing lustily, while the dark forest behind them sheltered them from the wind. The forest, then, was the victor in the world war. It had won back the fields which men had struggled to cultivate since first they broke, in the Bronze Age, into the defenses of darkness and linked boughs. Where were the vanquished? One might guess, as one saw outside a railway station an untidy wooden cross labelled "tomb of refugees." The Grand Duke Nicholas had driven the peasants before him as he retreated. As typhus lightened the burden of his trains, their superfluous loads were dumped into these nameless graves.

I saw another village of that marsh-country, whence the retreating Poles had carried every horse and cow. The peasants sat listless and stricken, smiling bitterly when I reminded them that the land was theirs. The crops were scattering the seed unharvested; of what use was seed, when one could not plough? As the whole civilized world wrangled, year after year, over the indemnities which should restore the ruined fields of France, I had sometimes wondered what had become of the marsh lands of White Russia, which no one remembered at Versailles.

* The Germans, if one may record the truth, did little damage, and here and there some good.

The marshes are being drained. The orator was the Commissar for Finance of the allied Republic of White Russia, and he was expounding his budget. The special miseries of those years of war are over, and White Russia to-day is grappling with the problem of her age-long poverty. For this country was always backward, distressed, and neglected in Czarist days. The Polish landlords are gone and the land has been divided, but, in the dry spaces between the bogs and the lakes, there is room enough to allow only eleven and a half dessiatines (thirty-three acres) to each peasant family of six persons. The land is poor; the cultivation no better than in the rest of Russia. On this allowance of land the peasants cannot live. They used in the old days to pour out of White Russia, as the peasants of Connemara would spread themselves over the English counties, to reap the harvests of richer men. Apart from intensive farming (so the speaker said), there was just one hope of improving their lot: the marshes must be drained. They cover forty-five percent of the territory of White Russia; it should not be difficult to add another three dessiatines to the average holding. On that the peasant could live. But, for a country without capital or credit, the process of reclamation could not be rapid. Thirty thousand dessiatines had been drained already, enough to bring prosperity to ten thousand families. But fifteen years would elapse before their program was completed.

Nor was this all that this stricken but spirited land was doing to improve its case. Its public revenue had risen from twenty-two million roubles in 1923-4 to seventy-one millions this year. It scraped together 1,350,000 roubles in the former year to build new factories; it was spending nine millions on that purpose this year. On electrification its expenditure had risen from

two percent of its Budget in 1924-5 to ten percent this year. There was one mercy in this marsh-land; they had no lack of turf, and that would serve as the fuel of the big new power station which was in course of construction at a cost of seventeen millions.

They had much more on which to congratulate themselves. They were learning how to administer cheaply; they had reduced this overhead charge from forty-six to nineteen percent of their Budget. They were training their officials and clerks, in compulsory courses, to use the neglected White Russian language. Before the Revolution there hardly existed one printed book in this language; it now has its big range of publications. In 1914 there were places in school for only forty-four percent of the children; they now had places for seventy percent, and would complete their system by 1934. The Czars had never given their country even the nucleus of a university. These people have founded an agricultural and a veterinary college. They will build their university this year. They now possess two State theatres. And they were grappling with the Czarist legacy of the Jewish problem. They had created schools to teach agriculture to the Jews, and they were getting them onto the land. Others again were being trained as apprentices in the new factories. In the old days their sole resource was petty trade.

Then followed the critics. A Great Russian (Larin) exhorted the White Russians to develop their work for their nationalities much further than they had done. It should serve as model for their unfortunate kinsmen across the border under the Polish yoke. An Ukrainian rather deprecated the policy of forcing specifically Jewish schools on the Jews; many of them do not really desire these favors. Another Ukrainian (Petrovsky,

President of the Republic) was rather severe in his comparisons, and seemed to forget that he had black earth, where White Russia had marshes. She was not spending enough on education, nor yet on the expansion of her capital. For that latter purpose the Ukraine had spent sixty million roubles out of a budget of two hundred millions.

The White Russian answer, from Commissar Tcherviakov and President Adamovitch, was a reminder of their country's poverty. Every year, when February came round, one peasant family in three had eaten all its grain and would have no bread till the next harvest. Few of them could wear boots save on holidays. They had 35,000 unemployed in their towns (in a population of 4,454,000) and, if one reckoned the peasants who need work but can never hope to find it, it was hardly too much to say that a third of the population was unemployed.

They had, indeed, made great progress. They had restored production, after the ruin of the war, to the level of 1913. In pre-war days no social service of any kind existed. There was not so much as a cooperative society. The Communist Party had changed all that, and was bringing the masses into social life and service. Hope lay in intensive agriculture and in the drainage of the marshes, which would be a second revolution.

It seemed to me a less than adequate debate. I could see the glitter of those flooded marshes as they stretched to the wintry horizon. My nostrils remembered the smell of the burned village. I wished I could have spoken.

* * *

The first touch of Spring came to Moscow on the morning which I set aside for a visit to the criminal

courts. I entered them reluctantly, for I have my doubts whether any attempt to solve the relation of society to the criminal can be satisfactory, though some attempts may be less painfully inhuman than others. It was the informality of the Soviet trials that struck me first. There was no parade, no thought of terrifying the accused with the majesty and austerity of the law. The usual artless portrait of Lenin hung on the walls. The Judges' table was draped in red. But for the rest there was little to suggest an official atmosphere. The three judges wore neither robes, nor wigs, nor chains of gold, and one of them was a woman. That instinctively reassured me; one supposes, though it may be an illusion, that, in dealings with their fellows, women become automata less readily than men. The accused man stood, neither guarded nor fenced into a dock, and faced the Bench. He was obviously a degenerate, with a head and features that should have warned any woman to avoid him. The woman in the case was not present. But she had been rash, and, because he suspected her of infidelity on the eve of their marriage, he had stabbed her, and she had barely escaped with her life. The facts were clear enough; the only doubtful point was whether the man had acted deliberately. The presiding judge, a comparatively young man, with a pleasant and intelligent face, intervened, and in a quiet, kindly, confidential tone, began to talk with the accused, as one man to another, almost as if he had forgotten that "the public" was listening. He seemed to put the wretched man at his ease; he asked his questions gently yet skillfully, and in five minutes the man had stated plainly that he went home, after the first angry words, and fetched his knife. The judges retired to consider their sentence.

The next trial was less original. Three men, who col-

lected accounts for the state railways, were charged with embezzling a large sum over a considerable time, and there had been some suspiciously careless bookkeeping. It was a complicated case and professionals were called in, experts to give an opinion on the railway's system of bookkeeping and two advocates to accuse and defend, with a third who held a brief for the railway. Property to a large amount was involved, and property can always hire professional skill. The proceedings had no great interest for me; they differed in no essential from those of other courts.

The Soviets started with the bold ambition of revolutionizing the entire judicial system. They regarded the existing system as one of the chief defenses of the propertied class, and they proposed that their own courts, also, should be organs of the class struggle. Their first thought was to banish the professional altogether. The average worker, using his socialist conscience and applying to each case his own revolutionary views of society and morals, was the proper person to judge his fellows when circumstances had led them astray. And so the old professional caste of judges disappeared. Again, they were scornful of the boast of older systems of justice that politics must be banished from the court. In every trial, a society which has its own conceptions of morality, property, punishment, and the relations of man to man, is applying its principles to the case. The Socialist State has also its own conceptions of these things; its judges must judge as Socialists. What has to be defended in Court, moreover, is not merely society, but the Revolution. The Soviets therefore decided that their appointments should be frankly political. The presiding judge is nominated for a year by the Executive Committee of the County, though he may be reappointed or trans-

ferred to another district. The two assessors are chosen in rotation from the lists of the local Soviet, and serve only for a week at a time; one might consider them a substitute for the jury, but they have greater powers, since they are jointly responsible for the sentence.

It is a fundamental principle of Soviet justice that all three judges must be workers. It has thus reversed the practise of "bourgeois" states. But experience has shown that justice, even in a Socialist State, requires some intellectual preparation and cannot be left altogether to the light of Nature. The judges go through a rapid course of instruction before they take up their duties, and even the temporary assessors prepare themselves by attending evening classes. In the higher courts of appeal, higher qualifications, "both political and technical" (as Bucharin puts it), are expected from the judges. In the Revolutionary Tribunals, which, in the stable conditions that now prevail, are coming to be of much less importance than in the early years of civil war and conspiracy, the judges are all nominated by the Executive Committee.

But the legal profession has, after all, survived. A Union of Advocates exists, which includes many pleaders of the former regime, and it appoints a defending counsel, whose services every prisoner receives without payment. But a prisoner with means may still engage his own counsel. The faculty of social sciences in the Universities has its legal section, with a four years' course, and an elaborate Code of Soviet justice has been compiled. Nature is not the only thing in the world which "will come back, though you expel her with a fork."

None the less, much of the revolutionary impulse has survived. The procedure is more human, more expedi-

tious, and less costly than of old. There are fewer appeals. And the old conception of punitive justice has vanished. The courts try to apply the rule that, where the crime is one which the prisoner is not likely to repeat, public censure may suffice in place of any penalty. For the habitual offender, the attempt is made to turn the prisons, which must restrain and isolate him, into institutions for his moral reeducation. He is taught a trade, or works at his own trade, and is credited on his release with what remains of his Trade Union wage, after his family has been provided for. In some prisons a self-governing system has been adopted and is said to work well.

The third case to which I listened had a bearing on the prison system. The accused was an instructor employed to teach prisoners a trade. He had more than once struck and bullied his pupils; his offense was regarded as a serious crime. That in itself was interesting, but no less interesting was the method of the judge. He was trying, from all the evidence before him (which he supplemented with questions), to form his idea of the character and habits of the accused man. Apparently he drank, and when in drink was brutal. The method reversed English traditions. Our judges deal with the offense as an isolated, abstract happening; this Soviet Judge dealt with the entire man before him. Russians, one may add, are always curious about our English indifference to physical insults. Larin, in a speech in the C.I.K. on Chinese policy, referred to the survival of flogging in English public schools. A Russian friend, when I mentioned this case to him, described an incident which he had witnessed that morning. A boy, ten or twelve years of age, had annoyed the conductor of a tram car, who ended by boxing his ears. The boy was so sure of his

rights, that he challenged the conductor to come with him on the spot to the police station to answer for his assault. And such is public feeling in Russia that the bystanders gathered round and compelled the conductor to go. The Revolution has its code of humanity.

* * *

Among many pleasant experiences in Russia I recall a visit to the barracks of the Red Army at Kazan. I was at first but mildly interested. The barracks were spacious and clean. The men were well-clad, and the food was both appetizing and ample—several hundred calories more, as the officers told me, than is prescribed in the Polish army. The social life provided for the men left no excuse for boredom, for every evening, according to a chart on the wall, some theatre, cinema, or concert was open to them. The usual political atmosphere was furnished in a "Lenin corner" of the reading-room. In one room an amateur theatrical group was rehearsing, and I had the first sharp impression of the peculiar social atmosphere of the Red Army, when I realized that, while the male actors were mostly privates, the women were all officers' wives. But I must apologize for using that forbidden word; officers vanished with the old regime. A red "commander" is simply a trained and experienced soldier with more technical knowledge than his juniors; he has no higher social status. One addresses the "Colonel" (again a forbidden word) as "Comrade Battalion Commander." His uniform is of the same cloth and the same cut as that of his men; nothing but an inconspicuous metal badge on his collar shows his rank. The men salute to receive an order, but they do not salute off duty. Discipline is confined to working hours.

My visit was nearly over when, in a big lecture room

of the Air Force, the "Colonel" (forgive the word) came up to me to say that the men were very curious to ask me some questions; would I submit? They fetched a chair for me, and presently some scores of them were gathered round me, in a big family group, officers and men together, their arms on each others' shoulders. The questions came mainly from the men, and very shrewd some of them were. They seemed to know in outline all about the General Strike in England, but some points they wanted to clear up. What had Mr. Macdonald really meant by this, or Mr. Thomas by that? And what, after the collapse of their resistance, was the present plight of the miners? Was there a reaction against A. J. Cook? Then they turned to China, and tried to discover whether from my English sources I could add to their surprisingly full and accurate knowledge of the inner politics of the Kuo-min-tang and the strategy of Chang-Kai-Shek. I gather that I came through the ordeal without too much discredit, for, as a reward, they would have it that I should try their rifle, with a red army great coat to cover my *bourgeois* clothes.

One could not imagine such a scene in any other army. But it was typical of the whole spirit and system of this revolutionary force. Other armies banish politics, but this army is founded on the belief that a good soldier must be conscious of the purpose for which he serves. He is not merely the defender of a national territory; he is the servant of an international idea. The army has its manual of political instruction, and every conscript is expected to master it, as he masters his rifle. In simple language it gives an outline of Communist doctrine, and then it turns to the various capitalist States and describes the present position and the future prospects

of the working class in each of them. It enlarges on the sufferings of the various victims of Imperialism, including, of course, the Indians and the Chinese. The exhortation to duty is based on the claim that "the Red Army is the defender of the workers of all the world." Very skillfully the defensive is blended with the crusading motive. Russia is surrounded by hostile capitalist governments which blockaded her, and for six years refused to recognize her government. She has often proposed disarmament, but these Powers have always refused her offer. Clearly she must be prepared. Then the claims of the Communist Party are advocated. Half its members fought in the Red Army through the Civil War, solidified it by their blood, and led it to victory. It has its "nucleus" in every company, and its bigger unit in every regiment. Every devoted soldier may join. The organization and discipline of the army are then explained. It has its one decoration of reward for distinguished conduct, the Order of the Red Flag, the same for all ranks. Betrayal of the people's cause in any form is punishable by death.

But the degrading physical punishments of the Czar's army have been abolished, especially the dreaded ordeal of standing for hours with the rifle at the salute, with a sack of sand upon one's back. There is nothing worse, I gathered, in the Red Army than simple imprisonment. Each battalion has its elected Council, which corresponds to the Works Council of the factory, and has the right to discuss grievances with the Commanders. In addition to the general education and the political schooling which are part of the regular instruction of a red soldier, there are compulsory courses in scientific agriculture which are invaluable to the young peasants, and a nursery for the future leaders of the village.

The active army is a small force of 560,000 men, one third of the old Czarist strength, in which each man serves for two years, though aviators volunteer for four years. There is a rigid selection which takes family burdens into account, as well as fitness, and last year men were also chosen by lot. The provision of officers is no longer a difficulty; men are promoted from the ranks and passed through the military colleges. The device adopted in the early years of the Civil War, of guaranteeing the political reliability of a commander on the old French plan, by placing a political commissioner at his side, is now almost obsolete. As one of the generals of the staff put it, rather neatly, "Few of our officers are now politically illiterate."

In addition to the active Red Army, there is also a much larger Territorial Army in which service is for four years, but the men are as a rule called up only for one month in each year. This is the defensive reserve, while the active army, in reality *troupes de cadres*, is mainly stationed on the frontiers. In the regiments of each nationality the national language is officially used, though Russian is (in the technical sense) the language of command.

The Red Army is, I believe, one of the indisputable successes of the Revolution. It has won the affection of the masses. It is as bold a departure from tradition as the French revolutionary army was in an earlier century. "To carry arms," as the military manual puts it, "is the honorable privilege of the workers"; they only may serve in it; the "exploiters" pay a tax of exemption, like the Christians in the old days in Turkey.

The Red Army is regarded as a weapon in the class struggle, and every conscious soldier within it feels himself the knight of an idea. As I revise these pages, the

Red Army is assembled on May Day for its annual parade, and every man repeats the oath of allegiance to the cause: "I, son of the toilers of Russia, give my red oath to protect the interests of the workers and peasants of our Socialist Republic, and also the rights and interests of the workers of the world, whenever this help may be required of me."

CHAPTER VII

THE NATIONALITIES AND THE UNION

For the traveller who reaches Kazan by night a welcome surprise is in store. The city is set on a little hill. One has left behind all the infinite monotony of snow-clad plains: here at last is a landscape which has a personality of its own. In a great bend the Volga, under its thick roofing of ice, sweeps past the town; the lesser Kazanka joins it, and on its farther bank there are forest-crowned hills. One climbs to the citadel to find, instead of the usual modernity of Russian towns, churches which recall the gay creations of the Kremlin, and a palace in the Moorish style, which was the last habitation of the Tartar princes.

For here long after the tide of Tartar conquest had spent itself and receded, the Moslem intruders, who so nearly reduced all Russia under their yoke, settled and vegetated and allowed their martial fury to abate. Destiny overtook them in the middle of the sixteenth century. Russia had recovered herself, and the rising Czardom of Moscow was beginning to unify the country under a native dynasty.

It went hard with the Tartars when Christians in their pride began to plant the cross on the domes of their churches above the conquered crescent. The architect's boast was more than a symbol. The Tartar aristocracy was destroyed. In the rich valleys of the Volga and the

Kama solid blocks of Russian colonists were settled. In Kazan itself no Tartar might inhabit the inner city, and to this day you will find their mosques only in the outer suburbs. The people which once had held the richest plains of Russia in subjection were now a degraded race of helots, who lived in poverty and ignorance on the edge of the forests. Such culture as they had begun to acquire vanished from their memory. Of schools, even in the latter days of Czardom, they had none, save, indeed, the religious school attached to the mosque, based on a tradition common to the whole Mohammedan world —the school were boys learnt to recite the Koran by heart as they swayed to and fro on a mat.

But there was no school in which Tartar (a language of the Turkish stock) was spoken or taught. The printing of Tartar books or newspapers was prohibited, and, in fact, only fifteen books existed in Tartar, all of them dealing with religion. The few schools which Czardom did create for the Tartars ignored their language, and existed only to Russify them and prepare them for baptism. It was thought to be a portent if a Tartar contrived to acquire a modern education. I met the first Tartar who managed to win a degree in medicine—a man in the early forties. This race might as well have lived in the depths of the Mongolian desert, from which it came. It touched the modern world, and grasped at hope, only when the underground Trade Unions and Socialist parties began to organize it, together with the Russian workers, for the desperate struggle against Czardom.

The Khans of Tartary have left hardly a memory behind them, but where they reigned, the Revolution has created a Tartar Republic. It was born without struggle. It was not a concession to a dangerous agitation. It came

into being because the structure of the Soviet Federation and the logic of Socialist thought about the problem of nationality required that it should exist. Its territory is not solidly Tartar: of its inhabitants nearly half are Russians. To raise a depressed race to be rulers of a Republic seems a daring venture, but it is, after all, what the Revolution has done for the whole of Russia. Its problem was to create a ruling class out of workers and peasants; the peculiar ignorance and backwardness of these Tartars was only an aggravation of the usual difficulty. The experiment is on a small scale, but it is one of many. The same daring architects have built from Oriental material as unpromising, or even more primitive, similar autonomous Republics for the Bashkir nomads, the Chuvashes, the Uzbeks, the Kirghiz nomads, and the wild peoples of the Caucasus. All of them enjoy administrative autonomy, save that the army, foreign trade, and communications rank as common affairs for the whole federation. All of them enjoy complete cultural autonomy. The real link between them is, of course, the Communist Party, which everywhere enforces the same principles in administration, education, and trade.

My chief concern at Kazan was to discover what the Tartar Republic is doing to raise its ruling class from these despised helots. The Communist view of nationality is simple and trenchant. In politics nationality is an irrelevance, save that it may in practice complicate the essential business of politics—the class struggle. Its positive meaning is a respect for the mother-tongue in which every race must do its intimate thinking. Politically the Soviet Republics are all built on the same pattern. They differ only in using various languages as the vehicle for the same ideas.

The first task in Tartary was to develop its language for modern uses. Its few scholars were set to work to translate textbooks of all kinds—with a preference, I suspect, for politics. The library catalogue showed fifteen titles of Tartar books before the Revolution: it now shows one thousand. An official daily paper sprang into life, and there was soon a weekly for the peasants, with four or five monthly periodicals.

The battering ram of the new ideas beat mercilessly on the door of harem and mosque. The veil, save in a few remote villages, has disappeared. In some of the mosques women are even seen among the worshippers. In all the schools the old conventions are defied by boys and girls, who sit side by side in the most natural way at their lessons. Before the Revolution no woman would have dared to teach: to-day they outnumber the men students in the normal schools, and even in the medical faculty. There are actually cases in which a woman has been chosen as president of the village Soviet.

It is only three years since the Tartar Republic came into being, but already its educational system is a living whole. The general principle is that separate schools are provided for Tartars and Russians. In each the mother-tongue is the medium of instruction, but in each the other language is taught as a subject of study, though Tartars are, I imagine, much more anxious to learn Russian than are Russians to learn Tartar. The two tongues enjoy equal rights for all public and official purposes. In the University and in the Higher Schools, Tartar inevitably makes its way but slowly. The number of State schools of all kinds (excluding the old-world mosque schools) has risen from 1,272 before the Revolution to 2,370 to-day, and in fifty-four percent of them Tartar is the language of instruction.

As the ladder rises, the percentage of Tartar pupils dwindles, as one would expect. There are as many as forty-five percent in the various technical schools, which give a grounding in agriculture, engineering and other trades, but in the Higher Schools of university rank the percentage falls to twelve. I might go on to speak of the 144 public libraries for Tartars which have been stocked since the Revolution, and of the 318 educational club rooms in the villages, which serve as nurseries for the new ideas among the Tartar peasants. The Commissar of Education was justly proud that among the Tartar population under forty years of age (including women) he had managed already to reduce illiteracy from eighty to forty percent—but the women, he added sadly, show as yet no eagerness to learn. These things are the commonplaces of the Soviets' work all over Russia. But these methods gain a touch of romance when one sees them applied to a race which but yesterday ranked among the serf populations of the Dark Ages.

I realized for the first time what the Revolution is doing in these dark territories of the Russian East, when I saw the students of the Tartar "Rabfac" before me. The name, I should explain, is one of the atrocious abbreviations in which Russians rejoice, and means workers' college. These colleges exist in every considerable town throughout Russia. They aim at gathering, on the nomination of Trade Unions and Party branches, the most promising of the younger workers, men and women, and giving them, in a four years' course, a preliminary education which will enable them to enter the University. They come from little country towns and remote villages, knowing barely the first four rules of arithmetic; at the end they pass their Entrance Examination at the University. The idea is that the Soviet

Republic dare not leave the professions as a monopoly for the children of the former privileged class, and cannot wait until the children of the workers have slowly climbed the ordinary educational ladder. These colleges, in short, are nurseries for the ruling caste. They are a stimulating sight when the students are Russians, but a view of the faces of these Tartar and Bashkir students made me long for a knowledge of their speech, that I might explore their minds. The heads and faces were remarkable enough as one saw them massed in the class room. The straight black hair, the high cheekbones, the closely set eyes and the wide nostrils proclaimed their Mongolian descent.

But through what mental adventures must they be passing! Conceive the bewilderment of these girls in their early twenties, if anyone had told them, ten years ago, that their destiny is not the veil and subjection in a Tartar laborer's hut, but a share in the learned work of the new rulers of Russia. That dark-skinned, comely girl with the great shock of black hair grew up in a Nomad's tent, the inheritor of a mental world which had neither changed nor expanded for ten centuries. Today she sits gazing at charts and pictures which illustrate the Darwinian theory, and dreams of her coming work as a doctor. The lad beside her, who may have hoped to herd horses on the steppe, may take his degree in economics, and live to administer the industries of the Republic. Within these walls they will make the pilgrimage from Mecca to Moscow, and pass from the world of Mahomet to the world of Marx. Russia is stinting herself: she lives dangerously and she lives poorly, but it is the ambition for a splendid future which gives her the courage to endure. Within a generation she will have brought, not the picked few, but the broad masses of

these neglected Eastern races within the circle of civilization.

Of all this titanic cultural work I can but give glimpses. Its inspiration would not be Russian if it neglected the arts; I shall not soon forget the rare spectacle of a play in the Bashkir language. The stage was the interior of a Nomad tent, and in verse that had a pleasant cadence, with the grave manners and courteous usages of the untamed steppe, a native caste in gorgeous costumes performed a romantic drama by one of the many poets to whom the Revolution has brought opportunity. My ears are still haunted by the Tartar folk-songs which the pupils of the School of Music sang for me, and I left Kazan regretting that I had just missed the performance of the first Tartar opera.

What the Soviet Union has done on a small scale for backward races like the Tartars and the Bashkirs may one day have immense significance for the cultural and political future of Central Asia. But the bigger and more immediate consequence of its broad-minded policy towards the non-Russian races of the former Czarist Empire was that the great and economically valuable areas inhabited by the Ukrainians and the peoples of the Caucasus were retained within its borders. The Ukrainians (otherwise known as Little Russians and Ruthenians) inhabit the rich black earth zone, which also contains iron and coal fields. It was one of the chief sources of Russia's exportable wheat, and it includes the big cities of Kiev, Kharkov, and Odessa. Cut off from it, Russia's economic recovery would have been hampered and delayed. This gifted race speaks a language which does not differ widely from Great Russian, which, indeed, its writers (notably Gogol) had always used. It had independence thrust upon it by the Germans; it

adhered in the early days of the Revolution to the Constituent Assembly and the Social Revolutionary Party, rather than to the Soviets. Overrun, first by Denikin and later, in part, by the Poles, afflicted by the organized brigandage of the anarchist Makhno and the nationalist and semi-socialist but pro-Polish movement of Petlioura, who, like Denikin, permitted the massacre of its big Jewish population, it had passed through the stormiest and most cruel experience in the annals of modern Russia. It could hardly stand alone; it had to link up (after the defeat of Germany) with either Poland or Russia. Its peasants had no instinctive inclination to Communism; its townsmen and miners were not satisfied with any of the alternatives. Neither trusted the Poles. In the end, after "Whites" and "Pinks" had both made themselves impossible, the "Reds" were able to consolidate their military victory by the concession of administrative and cultural autonomy. Its peasant tongue is now its official language, and if one has a criticism, it is that this recognition of Ukrainian nationality has been rather too generous than too niggardly. For the language of the educated class and of the towns is Great Russian, and some awkward consequences have followed from the abrupt change—thousands of teachers, for example, who do not know the homely, picturesque speech of the peasants, have been thrown out of employment.

The same policy has been followed, further to the North, in the poor and much less vehemently nationalistic country of the White Russians. Each of these Republics has its minorities, and for them too the same cultural liberty obtains. There are little areas in which Polish or Yiddish is the recognized language, and outside of these there are schools for these races. This

policy is so consistently applied, that at Minsk (the White Russian capital) notices and signboards are printed in Yiddish (with Hebrew letters) as well as in White Russian. Here, again, it is rather doubtful whether the Jews as a whole desire to stand so markedly apart. Further to the South, the tiny Moldavian Republic has been created, and it faces the unhappy and rebellious province of Bessarabia, which the Rumanians have annexed, by way of reminding its inhabitants of the autonomy which they would enjoy within the Soviet Union.

A full and honest treatment of the tangled politics of the Caucasus would demand a separate chapter. The din of the endless controversy over Georgia is always in our ears, and, on the liberal reading of the idea of nationality, the Georgians who stand for independence have right on their side.* But there is much that may be said, honestly and whole-heartedly, for the Soviet solution of a desperate problem. This confused corner of the earth with its high mountains and deep valleys, inhabited not only by Georgians, Armenians, and Turco-Tartars, but also by Russians, German colonists, and several lesser native races, was cursed, up to its reunion under the Soviets, with endless local wars and interminable feuds and massacres, between Georgians

* The overrunning of Georgia, after its independence had been recognized from Moscow, by Russian armies which supported a local "Red" insurrection, is the blot on this record. It may, of course, be pleaded (1) that the independent Georgian Government persecuted native Communists savagely, and (2) that the Western Powers used the Caucasus as a base for intervention in Russia. At one time, as documents show, the Allies assigned Georgia to Italy, as one of her many spheres of interest. The Communists excuse their apparent violation of the right of self-determination by limiting its application to the working part of any population. The Georgian workers, they say, called them in; they refuse, abroad as at home, to consider the rights of the *bourgeois* section of the population. This, at least, is consistent.

and Armenians on the one hand and Christians Moslems on the other. It now enjoys peace and harmony. The federal idea enables its little Republics to reconcile autonomy with peace. Their cultural claims have been met to the full, and the Soviets have actually done more for the Georgian language and for the resuscitation of its neglected literature than the former nationalist government. Whether, on a free vote, the Georgians would prefer to recover their full independence at the risk of returning to the old condition of economic isolation and internecine warfare, and of falling eventually under the "protection" of some Western Powers, I cannot say; it is possible. But this one may fairly point out; the Communist Government in Georgia is a native Georgian administration, and Georgians enjoy, thanks to the strong personality of Stalin, an influence in the Soviet Union out of all proportion to their numbers. As for the Armenians, where Europe has talked, Russia has acted, and provided them with a national home in which a remnant of their persecuted race thrives and preserves its ancient culture. In Baku, as in Kazan, the Turco-Tartan race is creating its own promising civilization. It is a creditable record.

When Moscow faced the problem of reuniting the territories of the former Empire which it had reconquered in the Civil War, only one thing can have saved it from despair—the faith of the Communist Party in itself. For the Civil War was a struggle not only of class against class; it was a war in which the center slowly won back the immense periphery. The Communists were strong in Moscow, Petrograd, and the central semi-industrial region; elsewhere the Social Revolutionaries, with their strong peasant contingent, were in the ascendant. Moscow owed its victory partly to its central posi-

tion, but chiefly to the uniform folly of the White Generals who turned the peasants against their cause. The immense area of the old Empire is inhabited by peoples which have in common neither race nor religion. They live on the most various levels of culture. The means of communication are primitive. The whole territory was a complex of hatreds and resentments, some inherited from distant history and others a relic of the class war. In an Empire or Federation one must have some bond of unity, whether it be the prestige of an Imperial autocrat, the superiority of a ruling race, or at least a common history and an identity in culture and trading interests. The new Moscow could appeal to none of these principles. What, in fact, it has taken in their place, is the capacity of the Communist Party to create, in all its territories, a ruling caste on the Muscovite model. The dogmatic basis of the Party was firm enough, its discipline rigid enough, its temperament sufficiently infectious, to fuse into a single governing organization not merely Great and Little and White Russians, who are on the same level of culture, but also the primitive Turcomans, Tartars and Chuvashes, and the intensely nationalistic Georgians and Armenians. Without the Party the feat would have been impossible. Its class basis has abolished the political meaning of nationality, while preserving the intimate associations which belong to language and culture.

A realistic study of the Constitution of the Soviet Union would begin with an account of the Communist Party, its tenets, its history, its discipline. A lawyer who set out to expound it without this preface would soon find himself silent from bewilderment. For the paper Constitution is the briefest and vaguest of documents. One cannot call it more than an outline of guiding prin-

ciples. If this scrap of paper were the real foundation of the Union, it must long ago have broken up under the strain of the endless disputes of jurisdiction and interpretation to which it must have given rise. Such disputes are, in fact, of frequent occurrence; the spirit of nationalism has been known to pay a fleeting visit to the minds even of veteran Communists, and territories so large and so various inevitably develop a local view on questions of industry and finance. These disputes have never become a real peril. The explanation is that while a man, in his capacity as Commissar for some department of the Ukraine, may hold strong local views, in his capacity as member of the Party he is bound to yield, after stating his case, to the authority of its central direction. The constitution does not mention the "Politburo" (political bureau of the Communist Party), but that institution is actually the sovereign body of the Union. I do not suggest that minor conflicts come before it. But on any large issue, it (subject to the decision of the Party Congress) lays down policy. When the big Congress of the whole Union meets, the fifteen hundred deputies who fill the stalls of the Opera House are not a mere collection of Russians, Great, Little, and White, nor of Christians, Moslems, and Jews, nor even of all the dwellers in the Caucasus, Siberia, and Central Asia; they are a disciplined legion of Communists. Their vow of obedience is really the central article of the Constitution.

When once this basic fact has been stated, we may proceed to a brief analysis of the Constitution of "The Union of Socialist Soviet Republics" which was adopted, after the passing of resolutions in the various federal Republics which then composed it (Transcaucasia, Ukraine, White Russia, and the Russian Federation or

R.S.F.S.R.) at a Union Congress held in Moscow on December 30, 1922.*

It opens with a stirring preamble. The world, we are told, is divided into two camps. "In the Capitalist camp reign national hostility and inequality, colonial slavery, chauvinism, national suppression, pogroms, and imperialist brutality." But in the Socialist camp prevail "mutual confidence and peace, national freedom and equality, and the tranquil community and fraternal cooperation of peoples. . . . The Capitalist world has failed to solve the problem of nationalities by the joint methods of the free development of peoples and the exploitation of man by man."

Three purposes are next outlined: (1) the revival of the economic life of the country; (2) the creation of a common front by the Soviet Republics against capitalist encirclement; and finally (3) the union of the workers of all countries into a world-wide Socialist Soviet Republic. This last purpose is heavily stressed. The Union, we are told, is a "voluntary association of equal peoples"; entry into it is "open to all Socialist Soviet Republics," which will form "one Socialist family."

The Treaty of Union which follows this preamble, opens with a rapid and summary enumeration of the matters which fall within the competence of the legislative and administrative organs of the Union. One may divide these matters into three classes:

First come matters mainly touching international relations and internal communications, which must belong to the central organs of the Union under any federal constitution. These matters are enumerated as: (1) diplomatic representation, (2) alteration of the frontiers of the Union, (3) admission of new republics, (4) de-

* Usbekistan and Turkmenistan have since adhered.

claration of war and peace, (5) floating of foreign loans, and (6) ratification of international treaties.

The organization of the armed forces of the Union (10) belongs logically also to this section.

Almost equally indispensable in any federal constitution is (7) the right to regulate internal and external trade, but it is not further defined. In fact, all external trade is the monopoly of the State, or of institutions created by it for the purpose. Then comes, no less inevitably (9) the regulation of transport, posts, and telegraphs. Finally (11) the Union budget is included, together with taxation and the establishment of systems of currency and credit.

There is little, so far, to distinguish this Soviet document from other federal constitutions. But, even here, on the threshold, two originalities should be noted. The inclusion of trade and transport means much more than interstate trading and communications. It means all trade and transport within the Union. Again, for all practical purposes, taxation is a function of the Union. The individual Republics and even the counties ("governments") have the right to levy supplementary taxes, and they exercise it, though seldom to any considerable extent. For the greater part of their revenue from taxation they rely on what used to be called in Germany the "matricular" contributions from the Union. The chief taxes, those on agriculture, trade, incomes, and, of course, customs, are all of them federal taxes, of which the yield is divided between the federal administration and the republics.

We now come to the most original feature of this Constitution. There is in some other federal constitutions an attempt to define certain general principles which shall give some moral unity to the whole struc-

ture. That is true of the Weimar Constitution which governs the German Reich. Of the American Constitution we may say that it is a charter of individualism, as the late eighteenth century conceived it. This Constitution contains, significantly, no definition whatever of individual rights or civil liberties; the subject is not mentioned. But it does invest the Union with the right to lay down the general principles which should govern all the chief departments of public life. This is conveyed in the fewest possible words, in the following enumeration of matters within the competence of the Union:

(8) The establishment of the general plan, the regulation of the national economy of the Union, and the conclusion of agreements for concessions.

(12) The establishment of the general principles of land distribution and exploitation, and of the exploitation of the mineral wealth, forests, and waterways throughout the whole territory of the Union.

(14) The establishment of the principles governing the creation of courts of justice and their procedure, and also civil and criminal legislation for the Union.

(15) Fundamental labor legislation.

(16) The establishment of the general principles of national education.

(17) The adoption of general measures for the protection of the national health.

All this would be meaningless without some historical interpretation. The various Republics did not chance to resemble each other, thanks to a preestablished harmony. Each was the creation of the Communist Party; each followed from the start the model evolved during the early years of the Revolution in Central Russia. Each was based on an identical reading of Socialist principles as to land, industry, and the rest, modified by the ex-

perience of the first period of experiment. What the constitution does, in this summary enumeration is, in reality, to conserve an existing pattern against any wide variation in the future. The "general principles" which the Union has the right to lay down, were already recognized and in operation. The Constitution provides, then, in effect, that in fundamentals there shall be no departure from these principles, save by the decision of the whole Union.

The effect of this arrangement is surprising and far-reaching. In externals these Republics look like sovereign States which have come together, as the preamble put it, for mutual protection and economic benefits. Their sovereignty, indeed, is recognized in a clause which, bluntly and without reservations or conditions of any kind, grants the right of any constituent Republic to secede from the Union. When one comes to examine the Constitution, this impression vanishes. For there is not one department of public life in which, either expressly or silently, the absolute autonomy of the Republics is recognized. Over all of them spread the "general principles" of the common model. The Soviet Union is plainly the most centralized federation in existence.

The remaining articles of this part of the Constitution are of less importance. They empower the Union to deal with migration and settlement, weights and measures, statistics, legislation defining the civil rights of foreigners, and general amnesties. There is nothing unusual here, save, perhaps, the curious importance attached to amnesties. But the last "matter" is of the first importance. The Union has the right to veto any decisions of Congresses, Executive Committees, or Councils of Commissars of the Republics, which infringe the Treaty of Union.

Like other Federations, the Soviet Union has found that allied States are not content that their common affairs should be decided solely by the weight of numbers and population. The fiction that sovereign states are equal, makes its appearance in the composition of one important organ of the Union, the Council of Nationalities. On this Council the allied and autonomous Republics have each five representatives and no more, while each of the autonomous territories has one member. This provision is a safeguard against the swamping of the Union by the Russian Soviet Federation, which includes seventy-four percent of the population of the Union. Little Tartary on this Council counts for as much as Great Russia. This Council has 131 members who are nominated by the sovereign body of each Republic. On the other hand, the Union Council, with its 400 members, represents the populations of the Union in proportion to their numbers. It is the body to which I have referred elsewhere in speaking of the C.I.K. (Central Executive Committee) though, properly, this Central body is a two-chambered assembly. The two Councils have equal rights, and the assent of both is necessary for the adoption of Union Legislation.

But the main concern of the Council of Nationalities is to safeguard the national rights of the many races of the Union. Like so much else in the Constitution, this two-chamber arrangement might prove unworkable were it not that, in effect, a single, disciplined Communist Party chooses both of these Councils.

The rest of the Constitution deals with the mechanism of the Union—its Congress, its Executive Committee, and its Council of Commissars. It sets up a supreme Court. It also contains the remarkable provision that, while each of the constituent Republics shall have its

own Budget, these "shall form an integral part of the General Union Budget, and shall be approved by the Union Central Executive Committee." In practice, so far as I can gather, the approval is not much more than a formality, but each budget is discussed.

What, then, remains of autonomy to the Republics? Mainly the field of administration. They may, indeed, legislate within the framework of the "general principles." But in all large matters, legislation is the function of the Union. Over the details of expenditure, over a wide range of industrial and trading concerns, over the whole range of the activities of the Civil Service, they enjoy self-government. The limits of Union and republican jurisdiction are floating, and very difficult to define. But one clear line is drawn by the distinction that while the constituent Republics have no Commissars for Foreign Affairs, War, Foreign Trade, Transport, and Posts, they have each their own Commissars for every other department. Again, as the reader will recollect, there are eight administrative departments (Agriculture, Home Affairs, Justice, Education, Health, and Social Welfare) which have no counterpart in the Union structure. Complete cultural autonomy, wide latitude in the field of administration, but a narrow range for individuality in legislation—such is the position of the Republics. To the Union belongs the real initiative in domestic policy and the sole control of foreign affairs.

Perhaps the most original feature of this Union is its anonymity. It is not the United States of Russia. It deliberately erased the word Russia from its title. It is, as the preamble to the Constitution plainly hints, the conscious nucleus of a world-wide federation, which is to be built on the Soviet model. The hope of its creators

was that as the world revolution proceeded, State after State, as its workers won their victory in the class war, would adopt the pattern standardized in Russia and adhere to the Union. What happened in Georgia might happen in Poland or the Baltic Republics, or even, in the fullness of time, in China. The Soviet Union, in short, is rather a League of Nations than a Federation. Whether this highly centralized Constitution is well adapted for that purpose, one need not discuss. A plan which has proved workable in the former Czarist Empire, which possessed scarcely a vestige of local autonomy, might encounter unforeseen difficulties if it could spread beyond the old limits. But it is the ambition rather than the mechanism which is significant. In this Constitution Moscow saw a working model of the framework which should one day include humanity.

CHAPTER VIII

THE COMMUNIST PARTY

To explore modern Russia, or to discuss the Soviet system, without some understanding of the Communist Party would be, of all intellectual adventures, the most fruitless. If the present Russian constitution as it stands on paper were taken over by any other people, without a disciplined Communist Party to work it, it would break down, amid a hopeless clash of competing authorities, within the first year. The Party is the cement which holds the loose structure together. The Constitution has, indeed, no interest, save as the framework which the party has chosen for its administrative work.

The difficulty of studying this party is that nothing like it exists on the earth to-day, or ever before our time made its appearance in history. It has sometimes been compared to Plato's "guardians," the trained super-men whom he invented to govern his ideal city. But the analogy does less than justice to the amazing feat that stands to the Party's credit. For the guardians were not only trained from infancy for their task; they were actually bred for it, so that heredity should combine with education to make them a superior caste. The Communists, on the other hand, were drawn by a majority from the lower and least privileged classes of the Russian population. Certainly the Party would never have come into existence without the leadership of men who

had enjoyed a higher education. Lenin, Trotsky, and, indeed, most of the better-known leaders came from the "intelligentsia," but the main body of the party has always consisted of manual workers, and the proportion of "intellectuals" within it has steadily diminished since the Revolution. It placed these manual workers from the start in high positions in the army and in the administration. If they claimed, like Plato's guardians, the right to rule by reason of their fitness for responsibility, it was not because of any advantage in birth or education. At every stage of their struggle, they were challenging and defeating castes and classes and parties which had an overwhelming advantage over them in these respects. Even their Socialist rivals reckoned in their ranks a far higher percentage of men and women who had enjoyed a university education.

One might amuse oneself by comparing the Party with the Jesuits, who set up a quasi-Communist State among the Indians of Paraguay in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These missionary fathers were also an international team, which included men from every Catholic country in Europe. Spaniards and Germans and Irishmen worked harmoniously together, much as Russians in Moscow work with Jews, Georgians, Poles, and Bulgarians. They, too, were knit together by a common doctrine, based on authority, and they, too, were subject to a rigid moral discipline. But they had two advantages over this Russian party. They had received a common education in the Jesuit colleges. And they were raised, by their trained minds and their possession of European science, far above the heads of the simple aborigines whom they governed.

The Communists (who adopted this name only after their seizure of power) have a characteristic history be-

hind them. They were not the pioneers in the Russian revolutionary struggle. The first socialist group which deserved the name of a party were the *Narodniki* (or the party of the peoples' will) who were active in the "seventies" and "eighties" of the last century. They were almost exclusively intellectuals; they sprang into life in the universities, and they included several men and women who were aristocrats by birth. Their spiritual fathers were the Russian writers, Herzen and Tchernichevsky; they were not Marxists. Their dream was to realize in Russia some native form of socialism. They idealized the peasants, and imagined that in certain feeble survivals of primitive communism, notably the village meeting or *mir*, which used to distribute the common land, there was a foundation on which Utopia might be built. Their impulse was the deep pity of generous youth for these peasants who had lacked the advantages to which it was born. With that genius for self-sacrifice, of which Russians are so often capable, they stripped themselves of the advantages and comforts to which they were born, and went into the villages as nurses or teachers, with the double purpose of improving their conditions and rousing them for the revolutionary struggle. This noble impulse had no lasting result save that it stimulated Tourgeniev to write *Virgin Soil*. But this group believed also in less innocent methods. It took to assassinating conspicuously odious officials as enemies of the people, and provoked a furious repression by the murder of Czar Alexander II.

Its successor was the Social Revolutionary Party, which grew slowly, until, between the March and November revolutions, it was much the biggest party in Russia. It, too, practised terrorism, at times on a great scale. It, too, believed that Russia could achieve so-

cialism without passing through the phase of Western industrialism. It looked to the peasants to act under the spur of land-hunger as the striking force of the Revolution. It had its tinge of Russian patriotism, and on the whole supported the Allies in the World War. It, too, was at first a party of "intellectuals" and only gradually (though at last on a large scale) enlisted a following among the more prosperous and better educated peasants. It, too, was anti-Marxist in doctrine, though it was affiliated to the Second Socialist International. Its temperament (for parties, like individuals, have temperament) was romantic, sentimental, and anti-scientific; its strong point was never organization; one thinks of the orator Kerensky and the novelist and guerilla-leader Boris Savinkof as its most typical men in recent times.

Against these parties, which were the characteristic expression of the mind of Russian intelligentsia, ardent, sentimental, and gifted rather for success in the arts than in science and practical life, the Russian Social Democratic Party arose by way of intellectual reaction. It was, from the first, European in its inspiration. It based itself on Marx, and believed in the economic interpretation of history. The struggle of classes, on this view, is decided by the evolution of the forms of production; as the industrial age, in its first phases, brought about the triumph of the capitalist and mercantile middle class over the feudal nobility and led to the growth of the democratic state, so, in its later phases, the growth in numbers and the coming to consciousness of the industrial workers must lead, in turn, to the proletarian revolution and the triumph of socialism. The scientific conviction that this is an inevitable process of history, gives to minds which embrace it, a steely resolution and

a stern faith in their cause which often recall the temper of the Puritan Ironsides of the seventeenth century, who had learned from Calvin to look to history with the same unshakable confidence, though he traced its workings to the predestination of an Almighty God, where Marx saw the operation of economic causes. This Party would hear of no short cuts to Utopia. Russia, like the West, must pass through the smoke and degradation of the industrial age before it could compass the social revolution or see the sunshine of the socialist era. The Party accordingly disdained the unscientific "mysticism" of the "S.R.'s" (Social Revolutionists), neglected the peasants as unripe material, and devoted all its efforts to rousing and organizing the manual workers of the towns which, within the forcing frame of Count Witte's high protectionist policy, were growing rapidly. The Social Democrats believed only in mass action, the classical tactics of an armed revolt of the urban population, and condemned the use of individual terrorism by the S.R.'s as futile sentimentalism.

Both parties lived "underground." They could enjoy within Russia no open or lawful existence. Even when their deputies began to find their way to the Duma, they were liable to be tried under the article of the code which made the advocacy of any fundamental change in the State a capital offence. They met in secret. Their active members were known often to each other only by numbers. Their leaders invariably came to use *noms de guerre*, flitted about from garret to garret in a perpetual game of hide and seek with the police, and survived only by providing themselves with false passports. Every active member graduated in the prisons of Czardom, and, after one or two periods of imprisonment, the next offence (which might be nothing worse than the cir-

culation of Socialist literature or the organization of an evening class for workmen) would mean banishment to Siberia. Their literature was either printed on a secret press in some impenetrable cellar, or smuggled across the frontier. The higher leadership and the active thinking of both parties were soon concentrated in the centers where exiles congregated in the free West.

There has been no such school for character since religious persecution ceased. The idle, the comfortable, the complacent, the sensual—these did not join the Socialist parties. Their councils were not haunted by the careerists who see their opportunity even in the labor organizations of the West. Save for the risk that a spy or an *agent provocateur* of the police might find his way into these ranks, the motives of these devoted men and women were inevitably pure. If weaklings joined the party in a fleeting mood of enthusiasm, the test of the Czar's prisons might soon be trusted to winnow them out. This life of peril was ill suited to the impractical idealist who cannot work with others, or to the babbler who cannot keep a secret inviolate. The safety of all engaged in these vast conspiracies (for any sort of socialist or Trade Unionist activity was, for the police, conspiracy) compelled the adoption of an iron discipline. The party might enjoy a democratic constitution, choose its leaders, and define its principles and tactics after open discussion and voting; but once a decision was taken by the majority, implicit obedience was required. In action (at all events in what was later the Communist Party), every member was a soldier who must be ready to carry out the orders of his superior, whether an individual or a committee, without discussion or hesitation. The Communist Party, in the most literal sense of the words, disposed, and still disposes, of the lives, the energies, and

the time of its adherents. An urgent call for two active workers, one, let us say, for Archangel and the other for Odessa, may reach a branch, and the choice may fall on a man and his wife, who will say farewell and go each to the post of danger, knowing that they may never meet again. If this life bred heroism and a noble hardness, it also tended to a suppression of the individual judgment and individual conscience, which seems amazing when we reflect that these men and women are above the average in activity of mind and will-power. It is, I suppose, the ever-present sense of danger, as well as a deep faith in the cause, which explains it. In conspiracies as in armies, obedience is the only rule of safety. Dodging the Czarist police, these conspirators, though in some respects they preserved a Quixotic chivalry, came to be indifferent to the lesser conventions of morality. Their names were lies; they wore lies; they spoke lies. The end justified the means.

The "Bolshevik" Party was the most audacious expression of this revolutionary self-confidence. Lenin created it by the deliberate promotion of a split within the Social Democratic Party. The issue was one of tactics. Since, on any reading of history, even the Marxist reading, a political revolution against Czardom for the conquest of democratic liberties was fated to occur before the social revolution, ought a Socialist party to hasten it by making a temporary alliance with the liberal parties? One section, led by the courtly and scholarly Plekhanoff, answered "yes." It afterwards condemned the recourse of the workers to the barricades in the Moscow rising, and in due course some of its leaders (notably Plekhanoff) developed a transient patriotism during the great war.

At the head of the uncompromising majority, Lenin

forced the issue, and drove this big minority (the Mensheviki) out of the party. He wanted no drawingroom revolutionists; he was bent on a class policy and on class tactics. Among the Socialist leaders of his generation, he, almost alone, had the naïveté and the originality to believe, in every muscle and nerve, what every mouth professed—the imminence and possibility of the social revolution. And so he did what few commanders since Gideon have ever dared to do; he deliberately reduced his army and rejoiced as he saw it dwindle. For he believed that when the hour of destiny should strike, amid the appropriate economic conditions, the iron will of a small resolute group would suffice to rally the town workers and to mobilize them for the enforcement of a proletarian dictatorship. Neither Lenin, however, nor any of the inner group, would have predicted in 1917 that the social revolution could survive for long in a country so industrially backward as Russia. What they aimed at was the lighting of a beacon which should be the signal for revolution, first in Germany and then throughout the West. They underestimated the power of the human weapon which they had forged. It trimphed over the incapable and self-indulgent "whites" of the middle and upper classes, partly, no doubt, because the peasants were resolved to hold the land, partly because Western intervention roused Russian patriotism, but also because the Communists were, in discipline and character, incomparably the superiors of their adversaries.

It was obvious, from the moment that the Bolsheviks seized power, that a subtle moral danger threatened their organization. They made a clean sweep of the old governing class and the trained bureaucracy, alike in the civil service, the army, the local administration, and the

courts. There were places to be filled by the thousand, and these they filled deliberately from their own limited membership, which often included men and women who had taught themselves with difficulty to read and write. Should they open their ranks to better-qualified converts from other parties? At first the risk that time-servers would wish to join them was not very great. They still lived dangerously. Few believed during the first years in the permanence of their revolution. Their members were still expected to risk their lives without stint. They were the shock troops, to which fell every forlorn hope during the civil war; they held the risky commands; they must journey to distant villages which threatened to revolt, and, if one of their armies was defeated, every prisoner who could be identified as a communist was remorselessly shot. None the less, the doors of the party were opened even in these years of peril only cautiously to would-be members. Only once, at the moment in 1919 when the Whites were at the height of their power, and Denikin and Judenitch were simultaneously within striking distance of Petrograd and Moscow, were all comers invited to join. There could be no doubt of the loyalty of those who at that moment faced the risks of the mass executions which would have followed a White victory. But the system of strict scrutiny was resumed when this hour of extreme peril had passed.

It is difficult for those who think of the Communists as a party like another, to gain any idea of the difficulty of entering it, and even of remaining within it. Combine the tests which a man must pass to enter the Catholic priesthood and the old German General Staff, and one begins to grasp the fineness of this sieve. There is a preliminary stage of probation through which every candidate must pass, and during this stage his conduct

is watched with minute scrutiny. Even after the novice has acquired full membership, the scrutiny does not cease. Expulsions are frequent, and from time to time a wholesale purge is carried out which may result in the dismissal of hundreds of thousands of slack or unworthy members.

The tests are both intellectual and moral. The candidate must undergo a regular course of instruction, both in Marxist theory (which Russians now tend to call Leninism) and in the methods of practical work for the party. At its close comes an examination, a test both of orthodoxy and of intelligence, at which many candidates are "plucked." The scrutiny which a branch carries out before it admits a candidate, or receives him as a full member, concerns itself with his record, his opinions, his personal character, and his zeal in the service of the Party. There is not much chance for a man who ever wavered in his allegiance to the Socialist cause, nor for a man who has been a speculator or a profiteer; a fondness for drink may disqualify; but perhaps the most fatal objection to any man or woman is that there are still traces in his thinking of "a bourgeois mentality." For this reason the tests are applied with much greater severity against an "intellectual" than against a manual worker. While the policy, during the last year, has been to admit the workers with comparative ease, a rich man may more easily enter the Kingdom of Heaven than an intellectual the Communist Party. Does this mean that the intellectuals who are safely within the fold dread the competition of new comers? Is it due to the fear which manual workers often feel of the trained minds of men who have had a professional education? Does it spring from a well-grounded belief that educated men will be less docile,

more critical, less passive under an imposed rule of orthodoxy? Or is it due to the genuine belief that there is an outlook on life, a code of morals, even a standard in matters of aesthetic taste, natural to workers but very difficult for a "bourgeois" to acquire? Whatever the explanation, the fact is that the Party is all but closed, for the time being, to new comers from the "intelligentsia."

The religious orders took their vows of obedience, poverty, and chastity. Chastity is not a virtue on which Communist morality insists, but obedience and a measure of poverty it exacts. For non-discipline the penalty for a great man may be a public reprimand and the loss of his high office—the fate which lately befell Trotsky, Zinoviev, and some of their friends. The former made the Red Army and the latter the Third International, but the Party felt itself strong enough to dispense with their services in these all-important posts. For lesser men the fall is apt to be more abrupt, and the penalty ranges from loss of membership, to exile to some remote and undesirable part of the vast extent of Russia.

A relative poverty is enforced by the remarkable institution of the Party Maximum Salary, known as the *part max*. No member may receive in any public employment more than a certain general maximum, which varies somewhat, from district to district, with the cost of living. In Moscow it is 225 roubles a month and in Vladimir 189 roubles. A nominal salary of $112 in Moscow has a considerably lower purchasing power than it would have in other countries. Even a Commissar receives no more. A Communist who happens to be a director of the state bank draws the "part. max," though a colleague who ranks as a "non-partisan" may receive

several times his remuneration. A "Red Director" of a factory draws his fixed "maximum" and can never expect a higher salary, while the non-partisan expert ("specialist"), who serves under him, receives in most cases substantially more. A man who is at once able and honorable will not enter the party with any reckoning that it may open the road to riches for him.

There remains, however, the case of the man who has ability and energy but is not burdened by a sense of honor. For him, undoubtedly, the Party offers opportunities which he may grasp—at his peril. Cases do occur—indeed, they are far too frequent—in which Communists who have obtained some coveted appointment cease to lead austere lives, and pay for their pleasures by taking bribes, or even by embezzlement on a large scale. A shocking instance was reported in the press while I was in Russia. Six men who had risen to fill the chief executive posts in a Siberian county ("Government") gave themselves up to a gay life, and embezzled over fifty thousand roubles of public money between them. The scandal had gone on for a considerable time. In the end they were discovered, tried, and shot without mercy. There was, about two years ago, an epidemic of scandals of this kind; I gathered that they have been less frequent of late.

Manifestly, no vigilance can now guarantee the party against the entry of men whose motive is personal advancement. The period of danger is over. The winnowing fan of persecution no longer sifts the ranks. A man, indeed, is safer in the Party than outside it, and most men in Russia reckon now on the permanence of the Revolution. The maximum salary may be much less than an able non-member can earn. But unquestion-

ably a man of good but not unusual ability, especially if he is a manual worker, will advance more rapidly to a position of importance in his factory, or in some branch of the public administration, and may even command a higher salary than he would otherwise obtain, if he can get himself admitted to the Party.

There are, however, some balancing considerations. The Party makes the most exacting demands on the time of its members. I have heard members lamenting that they rarely have a free evening to spend with their families or over a book. It often happens that a man will resign his membership in the Party solely because it makes intolerable inroads on his leisure, and exacts from him service beyond the measure of his health and strength. A bustling, energetic man may feel in his element, but now that the excitement of the period of revolution and civil war are over, the Party has fewer attractions for men of a reflective temper. It would be impossible to say how far the dominant motive in the Party is now personal ambition or the disinterested wish to serve one's kind and advance one's ideals. My own impression is that on the whole two sections of the Party would emerge from the test as successfully as human frailty allows—the older men who have risen to high positions after passing through the fiery trial of Czarist persecution, and the mass of the older men in the humbler ranks, who never aspire to rise above their modest positions. The careerists are to be found rather in the intermediate ranks, filling minor posts in the provincial administration or in industry. It is among these that the more painful scandals are apt to occur.

A new generation is rising, meantime, which has

been educated since the Revolution in schools which aim at teaching a Socialist outlook. Immense numbers of these boys and girls pass through the two youth organizations—the Pioneers, for children up to sixteen years, and the League of Youth, which includes young men and women up to twenty-three years of age. These organizations have some outward resemblance to the British "scouts" and the very different German Youth Movement. They encourage sport and lead in summer a jolly open-air life. They sing and dance and organize theatrical entertainments. But they are also vehemently political, and devote themselves to the serious study of Marxist economics and the whole Communist philosophy of life. They train themselves, even as Pioneers, in the performance of all manner of social services. Sometimes a group will help to teach the illiterate to read. Town boys will carry their propaganda into the villages for the benefit of peasant lads of their own age. Sometimes they will help peasants to repair their machines, or cultivate a war-widow's fields for her. They are active in Moscow in helping to rescue the miserable orphans of the war and the famine, who have lapsed into a life of crime and drunkenness. These organizations are creating a type of character and an outlook on life which is instinctively social, and unlike anything that can flourish in a society which admires and cultivates the competitive virtues. These young people, as they attain manhood and womanhood, are encouraged to seek election to the Soviets and to undertake responsible work. They furnish recruits to the Party, but even they do not enter it without probation and close scrutiny, and many who have passed through both the youth organizations fail to satisfy the final tests. I

imagine that those who have had this training are less likely to succumb to the temptations of power than the average recent convert who enters the Party in mature life without undergoing the discipline of persecution.

The Communist Party, shaped by Lenin's strong hand, developed a peculiar character which rested mainly on three original features. Firstly, it was formed by a process of rigid selection; it always preferred to lose rather than to retain timid groups and half-hearted or unworthy individuals. In the second place, it subjected itself to the most rigid discipline, and every vital decision was taken at the center. Thirdly, in spite of this centralization, it knew how to evoke and maintain the utmost activity of every individual member. It has never lost these peculiarities, but for a time the precarious harmony between its ideal of centralized authority and its habit of individual responsibility was in grave danger. The peril began with Lenin's death, or even during the last phases of his long illness. Everyone was nervous. What would be the effect on the Party and on the outer world of the removal of this unique genius? Could the succession run smoothly? Would jealousies break out among the leaders, which would have their echoes in the Party?

The result was that an almost morbid mood of superloyalty and superdiscipline followed, by way of response to this peril. There was a cult of unanimity. The debates within the ranks, which kept the Party healthy and alive, were damped down. The central organization assumed such powers that it took to nominating or suggesting the names of the secretaries and other officials whom the branches should elect freely. The fear and

silence which every Dictatorship imposes on the outer world began to spread among the dictators themselves. For a time the Party was in danger of becoming a mute regiment under the orders of a group in Moscow who held every appointment in their hands and might soon be able to organize the congresses which nominally elected them and decide the policy of the Party. Members who showed any initiative or alertness of independent thought at branch meetings began to be shunned and cold-shouldered. "Leninism" was imposed as a rigid and unquestionable orthodoxy, and since, like every revelation, it must be interpreted, the officials of the Party in Moscow assumed the priestly robes. Had this state of things continued, the Party would soon have become intolerable to self-respecting men.

It fell to Trotsky to lead the protest, and he did it, last year, boldly and with contempt for tact, as his manner is. In his attack on the economic policy of the majority, he was (if an outsider may judge) entirely in the wrong, and there he failed and deserved to fail. In his demand for a restoration of democracy within the Party, he was wholly in the right, and there he succeeded. The spell of silence was broken by the mere fact that he forced a thorough public discussion within the Party of the main issues of Russian policy. The atmosphere to-day is, beyond all comparison, cleaner and healthier. There is less silence and less sycophancy. There is less centralization. An "Opposition" exists within the Party, which includes some of its ablest men. It may be wrong-headed; it may represent no coherent view. But it is strong enough to force a thorough debate on every issue that emerges, and loyal enough, when the whole Party has debated the point,

to bow to the decision of its vote. In short the Party lives, for it continues to combine democracy with discipline.*

**Communist Statistics*

Some figures relating to the Communist Party may be of interest. In the early days of the Revolution its membership varied round about the figure of 200,000 for the whole of Russia. It has had as many as 700,000 members, but, on reaching this maximum, it applied a drastic purge. I am able to give the figures disclosed by the census taken on October 1, 1926. The very large number of "Candidates" reveals the intention to make a large addition to the Party membership; indeed, it probably numbers to-day approximately a million full members.

The full membership in the whole Soviet Union amounted last October to 684,824 of whom 75,640 were women. The Candidates numbered 412,032, including 68,163 women. There were 32,119 nuclei (branches) and 3,033 groups for the instruction of candidates.

In addition, there were 49,991 full members and 34,222 candidates in military service—a large figure in an army of 560,000 men.

Some 1,300 Communists must be added who were in service abroad.

The following table shows the social composition not, indeed, of the Party, but of the Candidates who are now seeking to join it. "Intellectuals," I may remind the reader, do not pass the gate easily. The figures are based on 51,596 applications received by sixty-three percent of the nuclei of the Union between 1st July and 1st December, 1926. They are all percentages.

Women	12.8
Factory workers	25.4
Transport workers	7.8
Other industrial wage-earners	6.3
Agricultural laborers	5.3
Peasants living by cultivating their own land	24.2
Peasants who combine cultivation with industrial work as wage-earners	5.6
Artisans and handicraft workers	1.2
Employees (largely clerks)	21.0
Teachers	2.1
Agricultural experts and instructors	0.3
Others (military, students, housewives, etc.)	3.2
Members of the League of Youth	24.6

CHAPTER IX

THE DICTATORSHIP

EVERY party which aspires to govern is in danger from the moment that it attains power. The danger of the Communist Party is something more than this universal peril. A peculiar and local peril assails it. It inherits power in a country which had the worst governing tradition in Europe. Insensibly its members remember how the rulers of Russia used to behave. All around them are men and women who expect no high standard of conduct in their rulers. The gravest of all dangers that confront the new Dictators of Russia is that they may gradually adopt the attitude of the old bureaucracy towards the masses beneath it. Russians have for years been complaining of the growth of what they call "bureaucracy" under the Soviet system. The word has a meaning which is strange to us. It includes, no doubt, what we call the habit of "red tape"—the operations of a dull but conscientious mind, which works by rule and will not bring either sympathy, or imagination, or even common sense to the interpretation of the codes which it has to apply. This is an evil in Russia as elsewhere; the apparatus is too rigid, too cumbersome, too expensive, too slow, too much given to wasting time and money in the pursuit of a devious routine. A simple decision must be reviewed by innumerable departments, and all of them work with exasperating deliberation.

But Russians mean a good deal more than this by "bureaucracy"—though this is bad enough. They mean, first of all, the attitude of the official who regards the common mortals with whom he has to deal as an inferior species, for whom he will take no trouble and to whom he owes neither courtesy nor attention. This type of official is always busy with something more important, and tells you to call again. He is the favorite butt of popular humor, and I saw a farce which satirized him (or, as it happened, "her") to the immense delight of an audience which had evidently suffered. Even I, though Russians are habitually almost overcourteous to foreigners, met with this personage—but only once, and then only in a comparatively humble post. For it is the minor officials who are most prone to this disease of uncomfortable vanity. At his worst, this type of official passes from indifference to insolence, and from insolence, when he realizes how soft and yielding is the human material below him, to predatory habits. The governor, in Gogol's irresistible comedy, *The Inspector-General,* expected the merchants of his town to supply him with vast sugar loaves and bottles of champagne, and to feel honored that they might serve so great a man. I have heard of a Soviet official in just such another little provincial town (it was not Vladimir) who would order what he wanted in the local shops on the understanding that the bill was a mere formality. The same person expected the young women clerks in the service to buy promotion or security of tenure with their favors. He survived for some time, trading on the timidity of some and the servility of others, and profiting by the boundless tolerance and the habitual passivity which distinguishes Russians from Western races. Much against the advice of his friends, a

young man who had more courage than the rest, lodged a complaint at headquarters, and, after prolonged enquiries, not this man only but the whole group of like-minded officials whom he had gathered round him, were cleared out of their posts. In countries where sheep are numerous and watchdogs few, wolves will multiply and flourish.

The foundation of all these scandals, great and small, is the timidity and fatalism of the Russian people. Centuries of experience taught them to expect such conduct in officials. Even after the Revolution they do not realize their power to secure redress, and, if they are not members of the all-powerful Communist Party, they may be pardoned for their failure to realize it. For, undoubtedly, that Party did in effect set up a sort of collective autocracy which differed, indeed, in aim and in its regard for the interests of the masses, from the autocracy of Czardom, but was in practice as little responsible to public opinion. The similarity under the vast difference was, indeed, so striking that a Moscow theatre has actually produced an up-to-date version of Gogol's comedy, under the title *Comrade Kleshtakoff*. But humor runs unweariedly on these lines. The Communists, however heavy their burdens may be, do constitute in the popular imagination a privileged class. I saw on a provincial stage one of the innumerable comic sketches which turn on this theme. The theme was an attempt by a young man to pass himself off as a Communist, in order to persuade a hesitating father to accept him as a son-in-law.

Nothing impressed me more, during my visit to Russia this year, than the evidence that the Communist Party is itself alive to the danger which it runs from this drift backwards into the traditional bureaucratic

attitude. There is no vocal opposition to play watch dog, but the part has been assumed by the Party's official organ, *Pravda*. It is unsparing in its denunciation of these and similar abuses, and it carries on an unceasing campaign against the servility and passivity which render these abuses possible. But it has gone far beyond the mere writing of leading articles. It has fostered a very singular institution, whose growth suggests that society in Russia is spontaneously evolving its own appropriate organs of democracy. I have described the fortnightly paper, *The Spur*, published by and for the workers of the Three Hills Factory in Moscow. It had two columns in which sundry grievances and abuses of factory life were discussed by the workers themselves in free and caustic language. One of them urged that the fact that one of the machines was lying idle was a sign of inefficient management. Another assailed a foreman by name, because he expected one of the girls under him, who was on piece work, to leave her tasks to make tea for him; not only did he degrade her by making her his lackey, but he robbed her in this way of part of her earnings. In every factory newspaper there are similar columns, and the graver charges find their way into the general provincial press and even into the big newspapers of the capital cities. The workmen who take it upon themselves to write in this fearless way about factory life (and indeed, about the administration generally) are known as *rab. corrs* (workers' correspondents). They are almost what the Tribunes of the Plebs were in ancient Rome, privileged critics of the rulers and champions of the common people. Their status is so far recognized that they enjoy a certain immunity, and when, as happened lately, an angry official murdered a *rab. corr* who had criticized him, he

was tried, not for murder, but on the graver capital charge of a counter-revolutionary attempt.

It is obvious that an editor who prints these criticisms assumes a heavy responsibility. *Pravda* maintains a big organization for investigating the charges and criticisms in the letters which reach it, employing for this purpose sometimes its own correspondents, and sometimes the machinery of the local party, or the Works Council of the factory concerned. It has on its books no less than 300,000 of these *rab. corrs* all over the country, and recently organized a Conference to work out the methods which they should follow. At the head of the permanent staff which attends to this department it has placed one of the most promising of the younger literary men of Russia, who, it is interesting to note, is not himself a party member. It can print only a small selection from the letters which reach it, but all of them are analyzed and noted, and periodical reports based upon them are sent up to the departments and institutions which they concern. In this way *Pravda* is able to supply the administration with a living and sensitive mirror of public opinion. The men who administer the Dictatorship know in this way "where the shoe pinches" and also what aspirations and ambitions for the common good are taking shape among the working masses. I heard of instances in which important new legislation, or vital amendments to legislation, had their origin in these reports. The method now adopted for levying the tax on the peasants' produce was first suggested in this way. To all this activity *Pravda* rightly gives full publicity, so that the too timid and passive Russian public is encouraged by continual proofs that public opinion plays its part, even under the Dictatorship.

Nor is this the only method of focusing public opinion which has grown up in recent years. In addition to the printed weekly or fortnightly factory newspapers, every institution which has many workers, and even every department of a big institution, has its wall newspaper. This is a big sheet which contains articles, verses, water-color sketches, or cartoons by the staff—usually by its junior members. One sees these outlets for high spirits not only in factories, but in the solemn corridors of the Foreign Office, in schools, in village clubs, and even in barracks. Humor predominates, which turns sometimes on public affairs and sometimes on the domestic concerns of the institution. In these sheets also grievances find expression and satire has full rein, even at the expense of seniors and chiefs. The resolutions adopted at Trade Union Conferences, which are apt to range freely over a very wide field, are another useful indication of public feeling. Finally, there are the amendments to the Party Program adopted at election meetings (see Chapter III, p. 42). These should be, and often are, a useful guide to the Soviets at the base of the pyramid, and serve to show what modifications in the policy of the Party would be acceptable to public opinion. They would be a more serviceable guide, if the discussions at these meetings were less hurried than they usually are.

In watching these developments and in talking to leading Communists, the conviction grew in my mind that a subtle change has been coming over the Party in recent years. In no sense has the Dictatorship been relaxed. No one within its ranks dreams as yet of tolerating any organized opposition outside it. Of all political tendencies and opinions which it considers "counter-revolutionary," it would say what Burke said

on one occasion of Paine's views—it would leave them to the refutation of criminal justice. It made a Revolution by force and, without shame or concealment, it maintains it by force. In the early phases of the Revolution it was a ruthless, reckless, and almost alien force, which broke in upon the slow course of Russia's native development to upset it and divert it, and to reshape it according to a foreign Marxist pattern. In those days it stood above the mass, bending it to its own will, and struggling against nature to impose in hot haste its own plan of a Socialist Commonweal. One must have seen it at work, as I did, during the phase of militant communism, to realize with what stubborn heroism—or, if you will, with what rash disregard of common prudence—it pursued this amazing adventure in social creation. To-day, it seems to me, it has come to think of itself more modestly, as the servant of the people and the interpreter and executant of its will. I was startled to hear one of the three or four men who form the thinking of the ruling caste say, in the most natural way in the world, without emphasis or self-consciousness, that the Party (he was talking German) is the "*Sprachrohr*" (speaking tube or mouthpiece) of the people. It seeks to divine what the people desire. And though it tries (as every Party which is more than an opportunist group must try) to modify and shape public opinion, it does realize (as it hardly did at first) that the assent, if not the active demand, of the masses is a necessary condition for its own creative activity. It watches anxiously, above all during elections, for any sign that the masses are becoming indifferent to its efforts. It would feel a sense of defeat and dissatisfaction, if a listless public were to leave it to do its dictating without sharing in its work. There was at one time a good deal of

truth in the epigram that the Dictatorship of the proletariat is in reality a dictatorship of the Communists over the proletariat. I doubt whether this saying would be a fair epitome of Russian political life to-day. The dictators have developed sensitive ears; they listen in the intervals between issuing their decrees.

At Vladimir I was very kindly allowed to attend a private meeting of delegates from all the branches of the Communist Party in the County, which discussed the results of the elections that had just been concluded. It was a meeting of comrades who knew and trusted each other. Nearly all of them, including the chairman, an able and commanding personality, were, or had been, manual workers; indeed, I came across only two "intellectuals," a doctor and a teacher. Many of them had graduated in Czarist prisons, though few of them seemed to be much above middle age. The discussion was orderly, but informal and good natured, and occasionally was enlivened by a joke which set the whole meeting rocking with laughter. In its election campaign, here as elsewhere, the Party had a single object—to induce the largest possible number of electors to go to the polls. The reckoning was that if a voter is hostile or indifferent, he will not trouble to attend the election meeting. If, on the other hand, he can be induced to attend, one may assume some degree of sympathetic interest on his part in the objects which the Soviets are pursuing. The Party had attained its object. While only fifty percent of the electors attended last year, the attendance this year was seventy-six percent.

Even more interesting was the effort which the Party had made to bring "new blood" into the Soviets. No less than sixty-nine percent of the members elected to the town Soviets were sitting for the first time, and in

the villages the percentage was still higher—seventy-nine. Here the intention was to diffuse active participation in the practical work of government as widely as possible. This is no new aim, but it has been followed this year, not only in Vladimir but generally, with greater boldness than usual. The aim is now to broaden the base of the Dictatorship—more citizens are to support it by voting; more are to serve it by sharing in the administration; more are to partake in it through the big recent increase in the national membership of the Party.

I gathered from the discussion that propaganda for the election had started earlier than usual. The Communist Youth had been busy and the press active; the cooperative shops had wrapped up their goods in leaflets. Much had been achieved through soldiers of the Red Army, who wrote letters to their parents in the villages. Plays had been organized, and clubs decorated. On the election day, in one village, while the mothers went to the meeting, the women arranged the cradles in a row so ingeniously that ten of them could be rocked by one string. The interest, as one speaker put it, was so intense that even the fire brigade, which is always asleep when fire breaks out, was for once wide awake.

The reasons which various speakers assigned for the success are worth recording. Everyone agreed that part of it was due to the rally of public opinion to the Government and the Party as the result of the menacing Note from Sir Austen Chamberlain. Next came the enthusiasm for the progress of the revolution in China. (These causes, be it noted, had operated in villages and little towns in the heart of peasant Russia. Undoubtedly interest in international affairs is far keener in Russia than in any other European land.) Next in

order it was agreed that the vote reflected satisfaction with the material progress of the community and the general well-being. The growth in membership of the Communist Party was another factor making for success. And lastly (note the recurrence of the *Sprachrohr* (mouthpiece) theme) it was claimed that the Party had rightly understood and carried out the wishes of the workers and peasants.

Two further points are worth noting from the discussion. One speaker said that the Party had won the gratitude of the peasants for the merciless campaign which it had carried on to suppress bribery and drunkenness in the villages. Two speakers reported that the *Kulaks* (literally "hardfists," i. e., the richer peasants who "speculate," lend money in advance of the harvest, and sometimes employ hired labor) were strongly organized, had taken an active part in the elections, but had been defeated after a hard struggle.

Among the reports of its work which the Vladimir Party gave me, was one which showed its anxiety to study the minds and the wishes of the people whose shepherd it was. In one big district (*uyezd*) it had carried out a house to house enquiry to discover what chiefly interested the inhabitants. Fifty percent replied "the theatre and the cinema;" twenty-three percent said "lectures and political meetings;" the rest did not answer. Then they were asked whether they were attached to the soil and wished to continue to lead a peasant life. Some thirty percent answered "yes," chiefly because they wished to have a security for old age. But no less than seventy percent would wish to be free from the ties which at present bind them to the land and the village. What impressed me was that the report did not pause to consider whether the wholesale transfer of the popu-

lation to industry was desirable in the national interest. It at once assumed that, if the people had a wish, that wish must be carried out. It went on, accordingly, to discuss how a big increase of the permanent factory population could be provided for, by accelerating the housing schemes and speeding up cooperative building. These surely are the most solicitous and obedient of dictators.

What, then, shall we say of this Dictatorship which broadens its base, keeps its ears open, thinks of itself as the mouthpiece of the masses, and begins to cultivate tact? Is it destined to a gradual disappearance? Is it fading into a rather original, but still genuine, form of democracy? That, I think would be a rash and precipitate conclusion to draw from the facts. I should say rather that the Dictatorship will behave, and is, indeed, behaving already remarkably like a democracy, but only because it retains, means to retain, and will retain absolute power in the hands of its governing Party. That Party may make a habit of yielding gracefully and compromising in the grand manner; it may choose to obey the voice of the people. But it will always insist on collecting that voice in its own specially prepared receivers. If it yields, it will seem to yield spontaneously. It will never submit major issues to a free election, nor permit an opposition to rally its citizens against it. Within these limits, it would, I think, be true to say that many of the fruits of democracy may be enjoyed. Even democrats who insisted that the voice of the people was the voice of God, have held themselves entitled to interpret the sacred text. The Communists deny God, but they too are learning to obey the voice—when they choose to hear it.

The Dictatorship, after all, can survive only under

certain favorable conditions. The town population, or at least the organized workers within it, including the railway men, must remain true to the Soviets. Experience has proved that, fighting on internal lines, a party which has behind it the massed industrial population of Central Russia can, in the long run, dominate the rest of its vast area. Again, it is a *sine qua non* that any conscript army raised within this central area must be loyal. That presupposes that the town workers have moral ascendancy enough to lead at least the younger generation of peasants. A dictatorship which must conform to these conditions has something in common with a democracy. It rests on the consent of that part of the people which is strategically important.

The other indispensable condition for the exercise of the Dictatorship lies in the fundamental rule of the Communist Party. It is a formidable instrument for action, because it requires and receives absolute obedience from all its members to every decision which its elected congress has taken. The consequence of this rule is that controversies which have once been thrashed out within the Party are not revived within the Soviets. The Party may abandon itself for a time to a hot and unrestrained debate over a big political issue, as it did last year on the questions raised by Trotsky and his group. The controversy rages in the Party press. It may give rise to a war of books and pamphlets. It may be actually the one topic which interests every intelligent man and woman in Russia. But, until the Party has made up its mind, the issue will not be raised within the Soviets in any form that challenges a decision. And after the Party has decided, the action for which its decision calls will be prescribed by the Soviets as a matter of course. The beaten minority of the Party will not merely sit

silent while the arguments of the majority are repeated in the formal Soviet debates; it will actually vote for the course which up to this point it has done its utmost to oppose. Failing the observance of this rule, the Dictatorship would collapse. If the discipline of the Party were so far forgotten that a beaten Communist minority were to renew the struggle in the Soviets and appeal to the nonpartisan members for support, the tradition of its responsibility for government must first have disappeared. This rule is so axiomatic to Communists that they accept its consequences as the only natural state of things. I happened to remark to a veteran member of the Party that, so far as I had observed, the all-important issue of the reduction of prices, which had been the center of contention in the Trotsky controversy, was never really discussed at the elections to the Soviets. If it was mentioned at all, the references were brief and never went beyond the vaguest and most general language. "But that's a Party question," was his answer, delivered in a tone of slightly pained surprise.

Here, then, one comes to the real core of the Dictatorship and the secret of the Communist Party's ascendancy. It reserves the real decision on big issues of policy to its own ranks. It can guard itself against the premature emergence, or the undesired revival, of these capital issues in the Soviets, because it can trust its members to be loyal in the letter and the spirit to their vow of obedience. Again, a peculiarity of the Soviet system renders it possible for it to exclude such issues from popular debate at the elections and yet to keep some life in these annual festivals of unanimity. These elections do not seem a mere farce, for they do result in the choice of men and women who will carry on the actual work of administration in the lower Soviets, in accord-

ance with the views of the masses. It is, after all, this work of administration that the average man can observe. It requires some imagination to grasp the importance of the deliberative work done at the center. Thanks to the intricacies of the system of indirect election, the average man is never rudely reminded of his impotence to influence the decision in these major issues. He chooses men and women to do his work for him. They in turn choose others to do their thinking for them. It looks like a simple and shipshape arrangement. The fountain of power seems to spring from the factory and the village. Nor is that a mere delusion. For while the Party keeps the vital decisions in its own disciplined hands, it knows very well that it must contrive, at its peril, to keep factory and village loyal and contented. On the administrative side, at least, this is much more nearly "government of the people by the people" than any other system which obtains in Europe. And I doubt whether the average Russian citizen* is deeply troubled because he is never invited to decide at the polls whether foreign imports should be taxed, or whether a Zinoviev letter is a menace or a forgery.

To what extent is this average Russian citizen irked or depressed by the Dictatorship? I attempt an answer to this question with diffidence. If a foreigner could ever answer it with confidence, it would be only after spending some years in Russia in some position which brought him into daily confidential intimacy with workers and peasants—for these are the average citizens. I have had no such advantages. I can form my impressions only from chance talks with workers whom I rarely met more than once. But I have been startled

* The average citizen is, of course, a worker or a peasant. The intellectuals undoubtedly feel their impotence acutely.

several times by the natural and spontaneous way in which a worker would say, when summing up the gains and losses of the Revolution, "Besides, we are free." He would say it, indeed, without emphasis, as if it were a thing which everyone knew, and no one could possibly doubt. In trying to think oneself into this state of mind, one has to cross many countries. Behind our own views of personal freedom and democratic rights lies a long evolution which Russians wholly escaped. Human beings do not spontaneously resent government by dictation. To accept it is, indeed, the natural and habitual attitude of our species. That part of it which inhabited the two shores of the Atlantic has recently (for, in the life of instinct and emotion, three centuries is a brief span) acquired another outlook. It arrived at it after opening its mind to a series of revolutionary influences —some economic, some religious, some philosophical, which all tended to elevate the Western conception of the sanctity and importance of the individual. There were none of these self-conscious individuals in Babylon or Egypt. The Catholic Church did not breed them. They are the children first of the Reformation, then of Whig philosophy, and finally of the French Revolution. These movements, we are apt, in our insolent Western way, to regard as epochs in the history of mankind. They were much less than that. None of them touched Russia. It is true, indeed, that a few persons of eccentric modernity at the court of Petersburg had read Voltaire and Rousseau before they died. It is true that, after barbaric Russia had hurled back the Napoleonic invasion, the minute literate class began to read, first French, and then German philosophy. They had less influence on the mass of workers and peasants, than the much larger class in India which has received a

Western education, has yet had upon the mass of Indian peasants. There was never in Russia any percolation downwards of the philosophic and religious individualism which in the West took such deep root in the working class. For, in the West, Protestantism, and especially Protestant dissent, had carried these ideas to ploughmen and tinkers. And what the Churches may have left unfinished the Trade Unions completed.

The Russian masses were immune from all such influences. They read nothing; indeed, they could not read. The Orthodox Church went on repeating the mystic other-worldliness of the dark ages. And the Trade Unions, when they did at last begin to influence the *élite* of the urban workers, brought with them not the individualism of French "philosophy" and English radicalism, but a rigid form of Marxism. This doctrine looked at mankind in the mass and taught the worker to think of himself, not as a human individual who had a title to certain personal rights, but rather as a member of a class to which he owed "solidarity." For nearly three generations English workers were absorbed in the struggle to win the Parliamentary vote, which appeared to them to be a badge of their individual human dignity. When the Russian workers began to struggle in grim earnest, it was to win power for their class organization, the Soviet. If English workers have since turned to Socialism, they retain, none the less, much of the exalted conception of the individual's rights and of his standing in the eyes of God and his fellow-men, which their forefathers drank in, with heads bowed in prayer, or learned to sing to the words of Robert Burns. This respect for the individual can be reconciled with the spirit of Western Socialism. To Russian Communists it seems merely a relic of "bourgeois mentality"—a true diagnosis, in

the sense that it was the middle-class revolution which first conquered the world for these conceptions of a humane democracy.

These reflections may seem trite and superfluous. But, in asking oneself what is the state of mind of the average man of another race and civilization, it is important to ascertain not merely what ideas his mind contains, but also what ideas are missing from its storehouse. The democratic individualist ideas never penetrated to the mass soul of the Russian workers. It leaped, skipping the long historic preparation through which the West had passed, from the primitive villager's view of life, which like the village itself, had remained unchanged for half a dozen centuries, suddenly and with blood-shot eyes, amid perils and excitements, to a highly doctrinaire and abstract form of Socialism. Why then, should this average worker and peasant resent the lack of democratic liberties, for which he had never sighed or struggled?

The tragedy of Russia is that, while the conquering working class had escaped this democratic evolution, the minute intellectual class, nurtured on a great and humane literature and familiar with the thought of the West, had passed very thoroughly through it. It, assuredly, had sighed for freedom and struggled gallantly to win it. It—or a great part of it—feels itself injured and insulted by a dictatorship which despises the fundamental liberties. Part of it has rallied to the dictatorship because, on the whole, it aims at many of the concrete ends which humanitarian Socialism pursues. But part of it remains in the shadow, dejected and disappointed. But again, we must not, by following Western analogies uncritically, exaggerate its influence. Its ideas do not percolate down to the mass, as, in the West, the

ideas of the middle-class usually do—and this for two all-important reasons. It enjoys no economic influence, for it is no longer an employing class, nor the associate and ally of an employing class. Nor has it the command of a press. The Dictatorship uses that instrument to make the thinking of the masses, and uses it with entire success. To speak of newspapers alone, its journals have more than twice the circulation which the whole Russian newspaper press possessed before the Revolution. The average mind cannot resist its daily influence, and feels (if I guess rightly) small inclination to struggle against it. Its very instincts of inertia are enlisted in support of the Soviet system. For, with whatever jolts and jars and losses and privations, that system works. To the average unimaginative man it has the supreme merit of existing. The rebel is always the imaginative man, and it requires an effort of the imagination in modern Russia to conceive any other system. Memory, indeed, can recall Czardom, but who would restore that?

But a candid mind, must, I think, go further. The Dictatorship in Russia was the inevitable outcome of her tragic history. The economic collapse, the daily misery of the mass, the shame of defeat in the field, and the weakness of the politicians who tried during 1917 to find a solution in compromise, left no way open save catastrophic upheaval. When once the follies and failures of the past have set to any society the problem of embarking on a rapid and thorough-going reconstruction of its foundations, Liberalism has no technique to offer it. The democratic idea came to life in close alliance with the doctrine of laissez-faire. For, while the middle-class, to free itself from the oppressions of feudalism, put forward its claims to civil liberty and a wider suffrage, it was far from supposing that the State would

be better able, thanks to these reforms, to play a creative part in shaping the destinies of society. It would be more nearly true to say that typical liberals intended by these innovations to disarm the State. Even the democratic vote was conceived by them rather as a defense against undesired interference, than as a means of ensuring rapid and fundamental change. They hoped, above all, that it would sweep away the last obstacles of the feudal tradition which hampered the free play of their own individual initiative as traders and manufacturers. The State was for them merely the door-keeper of the vast arena in which economic forces, personal energies, and self-regarding motives should have free play. That generation may have understood the implications of Liberalism rather better than its modern professors, who have discarded laissez-faire. For the moment one realizes in an historic emergency that the State must not merely regulate but also create, and that amid fierce struggle and at break-neck speed, the mechanism of democracy seems ill-adapted to its task. Could the two-party system and the tradition of the political see-saw, which are common to both the British and the American systems, survive a resolute attempt to introduce fundamental change? Would it be reasonable to expect of any party, which had done what this Russian party did in its first months and years of power, that it should jeopardize the very basis of the new system by risking elections, which might bring its adversaries to the helm, and result in the undoing of all that it had achieved? So much the candid observer may admit. He has still the right to ask how long it may be necessary to prolong the Dictatorship. He may argue that it cannot last beyond some point, which will always be difficult to locate, without causing lasting injury to the mind and

will of a people which submits to it. He may doubt whether a party which has learned to use these rough methods will ever have the greatness of mind to discard them. But again, if he is candid, he will recognize that the Russian Communists are, by devious ways, attaining some of the advantages which democracy ensures.

CHAPTER X

PERSPECTIVES

VLADIMIR is a little town in the heart of Russia, so far from everywhere that one feels, as one of Gogol's characters might say, that you might drive for years from it without coming to a frontier. One reaches it over endless plains of snow, in which nothing seems to change save that birchwoods alternate with firwoods. You read for an hour in the train, look out and wonder whether you have moved, so same is the white landscape. But Vladimir is unique in two respects. It stands on a low ridge of dwarf hills and it has two ancient cathedrals, a fortress which once was a bishop's palace, and a stern, massive town gate, which one might mistake for Norman work. Here in the Middle Ages dwelt the first rulers of Russia. To-day it is the capital of a "Government" (county) and the center of all the administrative and cultural work of a big district which combines textile manufacture with agriculture. I had spent a fortnight here in 1920, and I was eager to study the progress it had made in six years and a half.

The little town is not much altered, so far as brick and mortar go. The same rambling streets have the same untidy individuality in their shops and houses and spacious public buildings—for no one seems to measure space in this vast country. But in 1920 only half a dozen shops were open for a few hours daily, and then

the shutters went up, to signify that their stocks had given out. To-day every shop is open and crowded, and every window is full of goods. Then one counted the rare peasants' carts rolling slowly behind their half-starved nags. Now, on the frozen snow which lies four feet deep in the roadway, the crowding sledges dash at break-neck speed, for the horses are young and well fed. Then one saw young men only in the regiments which assembled here to march to the Crimea for the last struggle of the Civil War. Now the young men are civilians once more. One meets them in the van of every public activity, and their energy has quickened the pace of life and thought. Then there was but one topic of conversation—food. A distracted administration counted day by day the grain that was left for distribution. Good citizens struggled to supplement their siege rations through the lawful channel of the Cooperatives. Less scrupulous citizens bribed and intrigued and smuggled and speculated to satisfy their gnawing hunger. Now no one mentions food, unless it be to invite the guest to an abundant table. The haunting look of anxiety is gone; the children who play in the snow are round-faced and chubby. There is an endless round of amusements —from solemn debates to cinemas—in the clubs and theatres of the little town. Life is cheerful and even jolly.

A hard struggle lies behind this new phase of prosperity. Vladimir has worked. One realizes as one reads election manifestos and debates that politics, in our sense of the word, have vanished from Russia. Each Soviet, from Moscow to the remotest village, has one practical goal before it—to increase the output of industry and to draw richer harvests from the soil. These are the politics of the beehive. In spite of her back-

wardness, in spite of her poverty, and in spite even of the relics of her old illiteracy, short of machines, short of skilled workers and technicians, hampered by the old habits of careless, unorganized work, the will of Russia is bent upon these concrete tasks with a hopeful concentration unique in this world of ours. She is still poor. She is still backward. With all that she has done, she has not yet raised herself within sight of the Western European level. But the rate and promise of her relative progress stagger an observer who saw her plight, as I saw it, in 1920.

I retain a vivid memory of a visit then to the biggest factory of the neighborhood—the cotton mill of Sobinka, which lies deep in the endless forest, thirty versts from the town. Then the mill stood still—there was no cotton to spin. The young men were at the front. The older men were employing their time in putting drains into an unspeakably foul and miserable barrack dwelling—more like a prison than a home—which dated from the bad old days. They had built a wooden theatre and a narrow-gauge railway, and, short of books and clothing, of drugs and even of pencils, they had improvised a school for children and adults, and a *crêche* for the workers' babies. Now the place is barely recognizable. A big new mill, spacious, well ventilated and well equipped, has risen not far from the old one. Both are now running on electric power instead of steam. The *crêche* has expanded, and trained nurses attend to the children in a building as spacious as it is spotlessly clean. A doctor educated in France, one of a staff of twelve, showed me over a model dispensary, and then, as if that were not enough, led me to the permanent hospital, than which I think one could ask nothing better in the West. A handsome and comfortable

cooperative restaurant, which would seat thousands of workers, was ready for its formal opening the following week. An ingenious mechanical and chemical filter purified the water of the river, which formerly, with all its impurities, was the only supply. The wooden theatre was gone, and in its place was a big hall and club of brick, with its classroom, its library, and its gymnasium. The barrack-prison dwelling, which used to house families, is now clean and well lit at least, but it houses only single men. For families there have risen block after block of well-built flats, and, what is better still, a garden village is growing in the forest. The transformation seemed to me miraculous. It would be creditable in the wealthy West. It is a portent in poor Russia.

Sobinka was a little in advance of anything else that I happened to see in Russia. But everywhere one saw something of the same kind. The improvement since 1920 is everywhere visible. The sense of movement and progress in the minds of the Russian masses is one of the most potent reasons "why the Soviet works." The foreigner who comes into Russia with his Western standards is painfully impressed by the general poverty, the gaps in organization, the untidiness, degenerating at its worst into squalor, which reflect the Slavonic temperament. The average Russian has no such measures in his head, for he has never seen German farms flourishing like well-kept gardens, or Dutch towns orderly as a Victorian drawing-room. He realizes only that life is more comfortable and wealth more abundant than it was some years ago. His experience of the past teaches him to be an optimist about the future. The prevalent mood is one of buoyancy and ambition. The workers seldom realize that, in material things at least,

their comrades in the industrial West are decidedly more fortunate. They only know that in Russia it required a revolution to win the amenities which they enjoy. One could have no surer basis for loyalty and patience, than this reasoned conviction that the system which has already brought so many gains to workers and peasants, has in itself the potentiality of a still greater development.

The gains surely won are already considerable, and they touch the most powerful springs in human nature. The peasants have what all land-workers desire; they count their acres their own. That desire was for them a primitive passion, which ranks among their physical instincts, so deep is it, so closely linked with the sensations of hand and feet, as they spread out the roots of their seedlings in the soil, or tramp through the furrows behind the plough. The true countryman feels for the soil a love comparable to the ties that bind him to wife and child, a passion that can heal when it is satisfied, and corrode when it goes hungry. One has no measure of their satisfaction when one reckons their gain in roubles. We mistake the mood of Russia profoundly when we think of it only as a country of radicalism and revolution. The instinct bred in the placid solitudes of these great plains is one of conservatism which will tend to hold and keep what has been won. Every enemy of the Soviet system is now, for the peasants, a foe who seems to be jeopardizing their possession of the soil.

One may rank next, among the pillars on which the system reposes, the contentment of the former subject races of the Russian Empire. When one goes back in memory to the years before 1917, the anger and humiliation of these races was the deepest note in the massed chorus of discontent. So vocal was it, and so justly en-

titled to sympathy, that one was in danger of forgetting the suffering of the Great Russian majority. To-day these complaints have vanished so completely, that one is apt to forget that Russia ever had a racial problem. It is true that the disease has been cured in part by amputation. Poland and the Baltic Republics shook themselves free. But the big Ukrainian population remains, with the White Russians, the Jews, the Tartars and Turks of various stocks, the Caucasian peoples, and the primitive tribes of Siberia and Central Asia. In the matter of cultural rights and the facility with which their abler men attain to power, alike in the local and in the federal administration, not a shadow of a grievance remains. One may doubt, as one watches this development, whether the forcing of national cultures which were extremely backward and promise to add little or nothing to the intellectual wealth of humanity, is an unmixed gain either to these peoples or to Russia. One may ask whether assimilation to the higher culture is not preferable, where it can be carried through without arousing any sense of wrong in the backward race. But any doubt on this score is swept aside as one witnesses the working of the new stimulus of a satisfied and unaggressive nationalism among such a race as the Tartars. As an essay in political wisdom, few States can show any model to compare with it, for while the French Canadians and the South African Dutch have the same full enjoyment of cultural rights and a much larger local autonomy, the structure of the British empire is too loose to allow them the same share of power at the center, which the non-Russian races of the Soviet Union possess. By this broad-mindedness the Russians have won peoples, where the Czar had conquered territories.

But the greatest of all the gains of the Revolution, which affects peasants and workers, Russians and non-Russians alike, is the change of status and the widening of opportunity which have come to the immense working majority of the population. One may define this in two ways. In the first place, it means for every man and woman who possesses any energy of mind or ambition, that he or she may "rise," as nineteenth century individualists would have put it, to any position, however exalted, in the State or in industry. Some partial precedents will occur to every reader. It was said of the French revolutionary army, which proved its superiority to every other after Valmy, that every conscript carried a Field-Marshal's *bâton* in his knapsack. The United States has had a Lincoln at the White House and the proverbial millionaire who started life as a newspaper boy. In great Britain, and, indeed, in all the more advanced democracies of Europe, Socialist leaders, who were often in their early days manual workers, have risen to be Ministers of State. But in all these cases it was only the exceptional men who rose. They quitted their class in the process, and acquired the outlook and habits of the class which they entered. In Russia promotion of this kind is rather the rule than the exception. It is actually easier for a manual worker, if he has good brains and some capacity for study and self-discipline, to rise, as an elected member of the Soviets, to high influence and eventually to high office, than for an "intellectual" to win his way. Within the governing caste of the Communist Party, it is a handicap to a member that his father before him was a well-educated man, or that he himself, under the old regime, enjoyed a university education. In the army it is now normal that the commanders (one must not call them "officers")

should be the sons of workers or peasants. It is, indeed, only in the offices of the General Staff that any trace of the old atmosphere remains. In industry (as we have seen) half the directors of textile factories are former workmen. In fact, it is no longer necessary for a man of humble origin to struggle in order to rise. His fellows are eager to push him upwards. The depressing sense that a hundred obstacles lie in his path has vanished. He is part of a well-organized social system which, first by its educational facilities, its classes in the factory, its *rab-facs* (workers' colleges), and the open door to the university, and then by its processes of election, will help him onwards at every step in industry, in the army, in the professions, on the judicial bench, and in every branch of the public administration. The difference is more than one of degree. Russia is a Workers' Republic, and that can be said of no other State on earth.

The same fact may be seen in another light. The Revolution has removed the heaviest obstacle to the full development on its soil of the human race. It has done for every child born in the working class what the modern emancipation of women has begun to do for every girl. This child is no longer depressed in every hour of his years of mental and physical growth by the sense that he belongs to a third-rate grade of humanity. He sees no longer, as he goes to school, that the higher studies are reserved for children of a more fortunate origin. The whole world of culture stretches open before him. It cannot occur to him that the higher delights of music or literature or the sciences are a preserve fenced off from his rough-shod feet. Nor when he dreams, as every child should, of the things which he will do in the world, will it ever enter his mind to shrink from

the noblest and most daring vision that beckons, because he was born in a worker's tenement or a peasant's cot. That painful sense of a predestined inferiority, which was for the average young worker a weight which he carried with acquiescence, and for the abler worker a corroding jealousy and a distorting "complex"—this has vanished from Russia with the imperial eagles. It is difficult for those of us who have been born without this handicap, to conceive its massive effects throughout the history of our race, in limiting the growth of human faculty, and in preventing the mass of mankind from attaining the full stature, mental and physical, of which it is capable. This handicap will always work, where society is a pyramid. The greatest thing which the Revolution has done has been to remove it. To me it seems so great a thing that the ugliness and the cruelties, the losses and the mistakes, weigh light in the scale against it. Even the absence of full political liberty, as the West practises it, is a small loss compared with this inestimable gain of social freedom.

In attempting to cast Russia's horoscope, we may say then, that the greatest of all human problems has been solved—the problem of social freedom. The political problem appears to be in a phase of transition—the Dictatorship is broadening its base and feeling for a new technique of democracy, which may preserve it from violent shocks for many years to come. It is not in any aspect a problem so acute that it absorbs public attention. Politics, as we have seen, have been eaten up by economics. Purely political issues, like the perennial struggle of the lay view of life and education with the Catholic view, which never cease to influence French politics, have ceased to count in Russia. The pace and extent of Russian progress and, in the long run, the

permanence of the present system, depend now, mainly and perhaps solely, on the economic development.

The one need which overshadows every other is to bring about a rapid accumulation of capital. One shrinks from any estimate of the staggering figure which would be required to lift Russia, within the life of this generation, to the Western level. She must reconstruct all but three or four roads in her gigantic territory; she must rehouse her whole population; she must equip most of her factories, workshops, and mines with new machinery; the peasants must be endowed with a complete outfit of implements and more satisfactory breeds of cereals, fodder plants, live-stock, and horses. New railways and canals must be built, and the promising development of electricity speeded up. And when all this has been done, there remains to be undertaken the development of her unexploited wealth of forests and minerals, the opening up of Siberia and the far North of European Russia, and the reclamation of immense reaches of Central Asia by irrigation.

Hitherto Russia has hoped to drain much of the necessary capital for these purposes from foreign sources. That was the underlying object of the treaty concluded with the British Labor Government, which lapsed after the Zinoviev election; it runs through the pending negotiations with France. But there is really only one source from which an adequate supply of capital can be obtained—the United States. The prevalent mood seemed to me to have changed in the last two years. Russians no longer reckon on the probability of any early supply of foreign capital; they face the consequences of the political hostility of the capitalist world. They have realized that the test of their own economic policy will be its ability to furnish them with native

sources of capital. Their own production, in other words, must show a surplus which can be used either to purchase machinery abroad, or to pay the labor which will produce it at home.

This surplus may appear in Russian budgets in various forms. It may be a balance on foreign trading, which can be applied at once to purchase foreign plant; in this case it will come from the sale of grain, flax, timber, and other natural products. It may be a profit on the working of the nationalized industries. It may be derived from taxation, or we may say that taxation must be maintained at a certain level before the profits of socialized industry and trading can be applied to reproductive purposes. Actually, the greater part of the new capital accumulated in Russia is to be sought in the budgets of the autonomous Trusts, which apply their surpluses to the purchase of new machinery and the building of new factories.

Another possible source, though it is not yet considerable, lies in private savings. Plainly, neither the town workers nor the members of the underpaid professions can save much, if anything. But the more prosperous peasants do save and hoard a little. Accordingly one finds, in such a district as Vladimir, that the Communist Party is actually launching "a campaign for the encouragement of thrift." The iconoclasts of 1917 would have been startled if they could have foreseen this development. State lotteries for the raising of loan capital have become a popular feature of Soviet life.

The Communist State revealed its inexperience and its ignorance of practical economics by the methods which it adopted to accumulate capital. Working within a closed market which, after the war and the civil war, had an unlimited need for almost every prod-

uct of industry, it sought its surplus by the elementary method of high prices. It passed and is, in reality, still passing through the phase which economic historians describe as "the primitive accumulation of capital." It really supposed that the more it charged the more it would make. Even the Cooperative Societies often worked on this principle, and would show profits of one hundred percent and even more. Experience rarely seemed to pull it up sharply, or to confront it with big stocks of unsalable goods. Its entire system ambled along on this low level. Wages were scandalously low, and yet labor, measured by its efficiency, was costly. The personnel was extravagantly large. Work was done by hand which in every other country was done by machinery. The standard of individual output was low. The organization was wasteful, bureaucratic, and unduly centralized. But this waste could be paid for out of the excessive prices. And, though wages were low, the market was still in extent so vast that the effective demand seemed to be always in excess of the supply.

Skilled labor was in many trades as short as the supply of up-to-date machinery. But Russian industry in many branches exacts a high degree of skill, for the division of labor has made small advances. A Russian tailor is expected to be an expert in every operation which goes into the making of a suit, where an American tailor will confine himself to making the buttonholes. A Russian engineer may have to work at every process that goes to the fashioning of a machine tool. Naturally, on this relatively small output, per man and per machine, the surplus was much smaller than it would have been with a modern system of mass production, low prices, and high wages.

Plainly, the entire organization of industry requires

drastic reconstruction. But the starting point must be a change of policy in the matter of prices. When once the idea is firmly grasped that the crying need for new capital can best be met by a great output of low-priced goods, the old world organization will be compelled to adapt itself to the change. And with the more rapid accumulation of capital, there will follow also an increase in the real wealth and the real wages of the Russian population. The process of adjustment cannot be rapid, though on a small scale it is already perceptible. But the great advance which Russia has made within the last year is, that the men who control the State have grasped the new principle, and are consciously struggling to pass beyond "the primitive stage of accumulation."

This question of the price level and the accumulation of captial was the substantial issue in the controversy of last year within the Communist Party between Trotsky, Zinoviev, Radek, and their friends, on the one hand, and the official majority led by Stalin, Bucharin, and Rykoff on the other. It ran a course characteristic of Russian and Communist ways of thought, for it was not decided on purely economic grounds. Trotsky's group started by enunciating the proposition that it was impossible for any single State to attain socialism. This may well be the orthodox Marxist position. It was certainly the belief from which Lenin and the pioneers of the Russian revolution started, and there is much to be said for it, when it is applied to a country so backward as Russia in its economic development. Two conclusions would have followed from the adoption of this thesis. In the first place, the objective of Russian policy must have been defined as the promotion of the world revolution, and at any cost consistent with self-preser-

vation, nay, even at the risk of national suicide, the development of Russia must have been postponed in the service of this wider end. Any Russian surplus would have been used for the Red Army and for International propaganda, and the backwardness of Russian industry would have been excused, on the ground that eventually, in the Socialist world-State of the future, her needs would be satisfied with the products of German and British industry.

The second conclusion concerned domestic policy. Since one could no longer think of Russia as a State which could hope to have a Socialist structure while she stood alone, her urban workers, who must be the active force in promoting the world revolution, emerged from this reasoning as a favored class, and there could be no objection of principle to the exploitation of the peasantry. However odious such a course might be in a Socialist State, it was plainly impracticable to apply Socialist morals to Russia. The right course, then, was to raise the wages and promote the progress of the town workers frankly at the expense of the peasants. In plain words, the Opposition advocated a still higher price level for the products of Russian industry. Something, indeed, might be saved by curtailing retailers' profits, but the Opposition was prepared to continue the system by which the peasant must exchange his produce, which is sold abroad at world prices, for industrial products priced at a much higher level. Zinoviev, in particular, made a demagogic appeal to class egoism of the urban workers, and protested against any coddling of the peasants. Some members of this school advocated the unlimited, or, at all events, the more extensive importation of foreign manufactures, subject to heavy taxation, which would have maintained prices.

The Majority (as some complain) may have used the party machine to weigh the odds against the Opposition. However this may be, few reasonable men outside Russia will doubt that the Majority was in the right, on grounds alike of economic and political wisdom. Its victory, so far as I can judge, was also a triumph for Russian public opinion. The thesis that a single State cannot hope to realize Socialism was rejected—partly on the ingenious plea, advanced by Bucharin, that such an admission would discourage the workers in other countries from attempting revolution. Each would wait till all were ready for the grand, universal effort. But, dialectics apart, the real reason for the rejection of this proposition was that Russians, sincerely internationalist though their outlook may be, are primarily bent on developing Russia, and preserving the gains of their Revolution. Their policy is not yet a consistent whole. They have risked, and will continue to risk, much for certain international ends, above all for the promotion of the Chinese Revolution. But, in spite of compromises, one cannot doubt that their governing purpose—the purpose, moreover, which is destined to exert an ever-growing influence on their policy,—is to promote the good of their own population and to develop their immense territory. Axiomatic though such a definition of purposes may seem to many readers, it was not so for Russians; its frank adoption as the result of this controversy marks a break with the past and the opening of a new epoch.

The further consequences which follow from the rejection of the Opposition's theses are no less important. In the first place, the governing party has reaffirmed its faith in Lenin's policy towards the peasants. It will endeavor to preserve the unity of workers and peasants,

and, while the peasants are never likely to enjoy equal power with the workers in shaping the course of the Soviet Union, the workers are well aware that they dare not place their own material interests before those of the peasants. Their leaders feel themselves to be trustees for this relatively inarticulate and unorganized mass of humanity. It matters little whether it be Socialist morals or political expediency which dictates this attitude. The peasants may be inert; they may lack constructive thinkers and political leaders of their own order; but they have a formidable capacity for obstruction and passive resistance. Their discontent can dislocate the whole machinery, and frustrate all hope of economic progress, by delaying the growth of an exportable surplus. They can, in the last resort, bring the towns to reason by a mere refusal to produce for them, as they did at the close of the Civil War. Finally, without the active loyalty of the peasants, the Red Army would become an unreliable weapon. On all these grounds, the goodwill of the peasants is as essential as that of the workers. Had this controversy ended in any other conclusion, the Soviet system would have had some perilous years in front of it, and might have perished under the strain.

The rejection of the Opposition's economic reasoning had more than a negative result. It compelled the Majority to examine the basis of their present practice. The decision followed that the complaints of the peasants must be met, and the bold resolution was formed to bring down the cost of industrial goods ten percent by June of the present year. Some progress in this direction has already been made, but it is very doubtful whether the whole of this big reduction can be achieved by the appointed date. The pressure of the cooperatives will

be used to reduce the profits of retail trade. The danger of this new phase is still that Russians think too much of economy as the means of effecting reductions of cost, and rely too little on reorganization. But the automatic effect of lower prices and the higher purchasing power of the masses will make itself felt by compelling a resort to mass production. The abler men are thinking on these lines, and see the advantage of small profits spread over a large output. The minds of the lesser men move more slowly, and the development will be hampered at every turn by the lack of capital and credit and skilled labor. None the less it has begun. It will mean, as it proceeds, not only a more rapid accumulation of capital, but a progressive increase in the wealth and comfort of the population. On this development, more than on anything else, the future of Russia depends.

There are, however, other factors which may influence the future development of Russia. She is running a grave peril by her unworthy treatment of the "intelligentsia." The emigration after the Civil War, while it relieved her of a useless and parasitic class, did deprive her also of many professional men, or many experts in industry and engineering, and of some artistic and literary men, whose talents, if the Communist Party had been wiser and more tolerant, might still be working in her service. A few of these men, like the composers Medtner and Prokofiev, have recently returned. Still more disastrous were the consequences of the attitude which the victorious workers adopted, in the first years of the Revolution, towards the intellectuals who remained. They were made to feel their impotence too painfully. Teachers, in particular, often felt this acutely in their own sphere. Nor is it, I think, unjust to say that the less generous and far-sighted of the victors

took pleasure in depressing the standards of the educated class.

In some directions this policy has been reversed. The Communist Party soon learned that neither in industry nor in the army could it dispense with the talent and experience of men trained under the old regime. It had to employ these "specialists" and they receive what are in Russia high salaries. But the fact remains that the mass of the educated men and women in the public service are scandalously underpaid. Teachers of the lower grade average about 40 roubles a month, and country doctors about 50 roubles. These are the wages of an unskilled laborer. The first obvious consequence, which ought to be clear even to the most narrow partisan, is that the education of his own children and the health of the country population will suffer, if these all-important duties are entrusted to a depressed and discontented class which must live without ambition, hope, or comfort, in conditions which starve its mental life. The second consequence is that the whole intellectual life of Russia will suffer, if the class which hitherto has maintained its standards is allowed to sink into this hopeless condition.

It is a great and glorious thing to raise the cultured level of the workers, and to open the door of opportunity to their children. But, for at least a generation to come, Russia cannot afford to undervalue the contribution of the men trained under the old order, nor can she dispense with the aid of the children of this class. The same schools may be open to all, but for some decades yet, the children of well-educated parents must enjoy a natural advantage. They grow up with canons of taste, with standards of work, with a wide and sensitive outlook, which only the most exceptional of the

workers' children can hope to acquire within the first generation.

There was in the early years of the Revolution an alarming decline in the standards which the universities exacted. There has been a marked improvement in recent years, but some professors of high standing are still pessimistic about the future. Even when one revels in the artistic life of Moscow, exuberant as it is in creative vitality, one feels that its foundation is precarious. This educated class, with its trained sensibilities, is maintaining itself with difficulty. It is struggling with grinding poverty. It sees the future of its children with deep anxiety. A more generous policy towards the "intelligentsia," and especially towards the teachers, professors, and doctors, would in the long run foster the creative powers of the New Russia, enrich its intellectual life, and quicken the pace even of its material progress.

For the lack of full political liberty one may make reluctant excuses, on the ground that it is inevitable in a period of rapid creation, and that it does not distress the mass of the population. But the monopoly which the ruling party enjoys in the press, its control over the publication of books, and its patronage in the universities, have serious consequences outside the field of politics. It is broadly true to say that opinions and tendencies in philosophy, and even in creative and critical literature, which seem to Communists to be "counter-revolutionary," either find no public expression, or find it very rarely and with the utmost difficulty. I hesitate to make a sweeping assertion for I have met with an occasional marginal case.* But I doubt whether a book

* An opera with a mystical and religious atmosphere, on a theme resembling Hauptmann's *Die Versunkene Glocke*, to which some of my friends who are good critics attributed a rare poetic beauty, was lately performed

which argued the case for idealism in philosophy, a play or a novel which had a religious atmosphere, or even a literary study which belonged, in any militant sense, to the romantic school, could be published in Russia to-day without a sharp and difficult struggle. Controversy survives chiefly in public debates, which are (as I have witnessed) commendably free. This is a narrow basis for the intellectual life of a great people. It is living in the fetters of an arrogant dogmatism which, sooner or later, unless it should learn tolerance, must narrow the range and weaken the fibres of the nation's intellect.

Russia is suffering, moreover, from the isolation in which she lives. Contact with the outer world is indispensable for a people's intellectual life. Fertility, one inclines to think, may depend on the marriage of diverse civilizations. A creative impulse, such as Russia feels at the moment, is not inexhaustible. It may run its course for years or for decades, but, sooner or later, it must become first conventional and then senile, unless it submits to the influence of other ideas and makes its way against the shock of other tendencies. Standards are always relative, and Russians who do not know, or have forgotten during ten years of loneliness, how the rest of the world lives, are losing the ability to make comparisons. Franker intercourse would tend to the raising of Russian standards, even in industry and in her day-to-day material life. For this isolation the hostility of the outer world is partly to blame; in some degree, Russian poverty is a cause; but, also, the ruling Party is suspi-

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in Moscow, but only once a month. This compromise was reached after it had been hotly assailed as "counter-revolutionary." I gladly mention this exception as a sign that the finer minds in the Party may be gaining ground at the expense of the fanatics.

cious of contacts which it cannot control. It is good that foreigners should visit Russia; it would be even more useful that Russians should travel in Europe.

But the condition for Russia's progress which surpasses every other in importance, is that she should enjoy peace. No nation suffered so severely in the Great War; no nation has had an experience of war and civil war so painful and so disastrous as hers. She desires peace ardently, if only because she knows that even a short and victorious campaign would interrupt her constructive work, check her patient efforts to restore her industry, and fling her back into the miseries from which she seemed to have escaped. She has earned her title to peace, not only by her sufferings, but also by her achievements. Never before in history, and nowhere else in the world to-day, has the will of a nation been bent, as it is bent in Russia, to the supreme task of raising its entire population to the full stature of humanity. Its errors spring from the defects of great qualities. Intolerant it has been. But does tolerance create? It has rushed to violent extremes. But is moderation ever a pioneer? It has made its effort with unconquerable heroism. By its unflinching endurance, through the dark years of blockade and civil war, of trials for which there is no parallel in modern history, it has won its right to understanding and respect. But, above all, it has won its right to peace.

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